

# THE LADY OF THE ROBINS

A ROMANCE OF  
Some of New York's 400

BY  
ADELLA OCTAVIA CLOUSTON

AUTHOR OF  
"What Would the World Think"  
"A Title Rejected"  
Etc.

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I would not enter on my list of friends,  
Though graced with polished manners and fine sense.  
Yet wanting sensibility, the man  
Who needlessly sets foot upon a worm.—*Cowper*

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PUBLISHED BY  
The American Humane Education Society  
DR. FRANCIS H. ROWLEY, President  
GUY RICHARDSON, Secretary

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"Ever'thing comes t' him who waits  
Except a loaned book."

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# INTRODUCTION

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## The American Humane Education Society



DR. FRANCIS H. ROWLEY, *President*  
HON. HENRY B. HILL, *Treasurer*  
GUY RICHARDSON, *Secretary*

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### THE AMERICAN HUMANE EDUCATION SOCIETY

**The first Society of its kind in the World**

Founded by Geo. T. Angell

Incorporated, March, 1889

The American Humane Education Society was incorporated by a special act of the Massachusetts legislature, and has power to hold a million of dollars. It is an organized effort to promote "Glory to God," "Peace on Earth," "Kindness, Justice and Mercy to Every Living Creature, both Human and Dumb," by carrying humane education into all our American schools and homes, aiding humane societies, and founding Bands of Mercy over the whole American Continent.

Its president is Dr. Francis H. Rowley of 45 Milk Street, Boston; its vice-presidents are the Governor of Massachusetts, ex-Governor John D. Long, Most Reverend William H. O'Connell, Bishop Willard F. Mal-  
laliu, and other prominent gentlemen and ladies. On its board of directors are two of our Massachusetts judges, ex-Attorney General Albert E. Pillsbury, and other prominent gentlemen. Its directors are elected for life; when one dies another is elected.

By a special act of the Massachusetts legislature its property is held in trust by three trustees, Messrs. Alfred Bowditch, Laurence Minot and Thomas Nelson Perkins. All three are widely known as investors in Boston and elsewhere.

## THE AMERICAN HUMANE EDUCATION SOCIETY.

In its first year it founded in western states fourteen new humane Societies and four hundred and sixty-six new Bands of Mercy, and offered prizes for essays to the students in all our American colleges, also to all American editors.

It has caused to be established Bands of Mercy, in all our states and territories and elsewhere, and claims that by humane education it is not only preventing cruelty but protecting property and life from incendiary fires, railroad wrecks, and all other forms of outrage.

It has carried the circulation of the one book, "Black Beauty," up to over three million copies. By prize offers and otherwise it has obtained various other humane stories and valuable humane literature, which have had wide circulation in our own country and elsewhere, some of them reaching a circulation of hundreds of thousands. It has employed several missionaries.

It sends its organ, *Our Dumb Animals*, every month to the editors of every newspaper and magazine in America north of Mexico, to the presidents of all American universities and colleges north of Mexico, and to all members of Congress.

It has already distributed, at half cost, in the public schools and elsewhere, 150,000 copies of its three most popular books, "Black Beauty," "Strike at Shane's," and "Our Gold Mine at Hollyhurst."

In a single year the American Humane Education Society and the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals printed and distributed more than a hundred and seventeen millions of pages of humane literature.

All persons wishing to know more about this Society are respectfully requested to write

DR. FRANCIS H. ROWLEY, *President*,  
45 Milk Street, Boston.

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### FORM OF WILL

I do hereby give, devise and bequeath to "The American Humane Education Society," incorporated by special Act of the Legislature of Massachusetts, the sum of . . . . . dollars (or if other property, describe the property).

To give to "The Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals," use the same words, only substituting its name in place of "The American Humane Education Society."

If there are inheritance or legacy taxes at the time of executing your will, please kindly say (if you so wish) that they are to be paid from the estate.

# THE LADY OF THE ROBINS

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SOME OF NEW YORK'S 400

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This little book which is at once a charming love tale and a literary product with a purpose, won the highest prize offered by our American Humane Education Society for the best story on the cruelties of fashion.

That it must do a vast amount of good among the rich who shall read it, making them more thoughtful and so more kind, and at the same time delight and help a multitude of others to whom it will reveal the fact that among the rich there are many humane, merciful and unselfish, we cannot doubt.

When this Society began to publish "Black Beauty" one generous woman gave five thousand dollars to introduce it to a lot of people to whom it was mailed free. We would greatly like to be able to send "The Lady of the Robins" far and wide upon a mission of kindness and good will. All gifts for this object will be acknowledged in *Our Dumb Animals*.

FRANCIS H. ROWLEY,

*President of the American Humane Education Society, the  
Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals,  
and the Parent American Band of Mercy, 45 Milk Street, Boston*

## PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS.

MRS. NORMAN BURTON, *the severely conventional widow of a multi-millionaire.*

MISS HELEN BURTON, *her fashionable and evidently favorite daughter.*

MISS LAURA BURTON, *Helen's elder sister. A girl of forcible character, noble intentions, and the heroine of the story.*

MR. EDMUND BURTON, *Mrs. Burton's only son, and a gentleman of leisure.*

MISS LILLIAN CHESTER, *a young lady of nine years, extremely precocious and self-willed, but her grandmother's particular pet.*

MR. HAROLD CORNELL, *one of the best specimens of New York's "400," but temporarily under a cloud.*

MAJOR UPTON, *a retired army officer, somewhat aggressive but always logical.*

MRS. ARCHIBALD VERNYOSE, *a wealthy, eccentric, but kindly disposed woman, who manages her millions to please herself.*

MRS. CORNELL, *a devotee of fashion, and a thoroughly heartless woman.*

MADAME DUPONT, *a handsome and vivacious French milliner, supposed to be incognito.*

MRS. WILLIAM OLNEY MARVIN,	}	<i>All prominent members of society who became interested in Miss Laura Burton's gigantic scheme of philanthropy.</i>
MISS MADELINE BRONSON,		
MISS GERTRUDE WELLINGTON,		
MISS PERSIS HUNTINGTON.		

# THE LADY OF THE ROBINS

A ROMANCE OF

SOME OF NEW YORK'S FOUR HUNDRED.

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## CHAPTER I.



MR. Norman Burton sat dozing before an open grate in the handsomely appointed music-room of her town house on Murray Hill, New York. A Turkish hand screen of filigree and ivory had fallen from her hand, and her usually pale, cold complexion was decidedly flushed by the heat from the fire.

Across the room her daughter Helen, a girl of twenty, sat at a piano practising the latest opera, while Edmund, her son, was idly looking through the columns of an evening paper.

Suddenly a little clock on the mantle struck ten. As the last stroke sounded Mrs. Burton opened her eyes, glanced rapidly about the room, then fretfully asked if her daughter Laura had returned.

"No, mother," replied Edmund, "she has not."

"What can she mean by remaining out so late," continued Mrs. Burton, still more fretfully. "Really that girl distracts me. I shall be compelled to forbid her from crossing the threshold unattended if she persists in keeping such late hours."

Mrs. Burton rose from her seat and swept into the drawing-room, her handsome evening gown trailing behind her. Stepping to a front window she threw the lace curtain aside and looked into the street, but it was deserted.

"It's a positive disgrace," Mrs. Burton continued, as she returned to her seat by the fire, "for Laura to conduct herself in this Bohemian manner. No well-bred girl who values her reputation would venture out in the evening unchaperoned and remain until this hour. She is a positive reproach to my training and influence, and Laura was so carefully reared, too. Why does she disregard my wishes? What have I done to merit such treatment from her?"

"There's no occasion, mother, to be anxious about Laura," remarked Edmund, indifferently. "She's quite capable of taking care of herself."

"Besides," broke in Helen, in a slightly sarcastic tone, "we are morally certain that Laura is attending a revival meeting in that non-sectarian tabernacle. So don't worry, mother; even a revival meeting in that superlatively religious camp can't last much longer, and without doubt she'll soon be here."

Mrs. Norman Burton's proud lip curled scornfully. "Why can't she be content with attending church with us on Sabbath mornings like any sensible girl, instead of running after a lot of religious cranks and semi-lunatics at such unheard-of hours? Positively it's a mystery to me from whom she took

her peculiarities. It certainly was not from my side of the house."

At that moment there was a loud noise as of some one falling, followed by a little shriek, then a bound and a laugh. In another moment Miss Lillian Chester stood before them. Miss Lillian was a young lady of nine years—the orphan child of Mrs. Norman Burton's favorite daughter, who had died when Lillian was but three years old. From the day of Mrs. Chester's death the child had lived with her grandmother, and literally ruled the house with her determined young will. Whatever this young autocrat did was considered very near right by her doting grandmother, who would sanction in her what she would have sanctioned in no one else. At times Mrs. Burton made a pretense of reproving, and of correcting her; nevertheless she was quite indignant if any one else presumed to do so.

"How did you manage it, Queen Lil?" asked young Burton, as the child so unceremoniously appeared in the room.

"Manage what?" asked Lillian.

"Why, the racket you just made. For a moment I thought the ceiling had fallen down or—"

"Sixty-five pounds avoirdupois would be nearer the truth," interrupted the little lady with an air of wonderful wisdom. "You are too ex-ex-extravagant in the things you say, uncle Ed, and it's not nice nor proper."

"What do you know about avoirdupois, and ex-

travagance, and all that?" asked Edmund, quite amused.

"I know a lot about it," returned Lillian. "Miss Wilson tells me the different kinds of weights, and calls me an '*avoirdu pois*.' It sounds like some kind of an animal, doesn't it?"

"But you haven't answered my question. How did you manage to make all that noise?"

"Oh, I didn't manage it at all," she replied, laughingly. "It was managed for me by old—old—Morpheus, as aunt Helen calls him. I was sound asleep in there" (pointing to the drawing-room) "on a sofa, and the first I knew I was lying flat on the floor, but I didn't lie there long."

"Children like you," said Mrs. Burton, "should be in bed before this hour. I have time and time again requested that you be in bed every night at eight o'clock. Really, I don't know how Bartlett dares disobey me as she does. I shall be compelled to—"

"Grandma, dear," interrupted Lillian, fearlessly, "you must not blame Bartlett, for she is not to blame. She wanted to put me to bed at eight o'clock, and she tried her best to do so, but I wouldn't be put. Then when aunt Helen began that terrible racket on the piano, I laid down on the sofa to wait for auntie Laura, and—well I guess I fell asleep, though I didn't mean to. That's all."

"You shouldn't use such expressions, Lillian, as 'that terrible racket on the piano.' You certainly do not learn them from your governess, Miss Wilson?"



"No indeed, grandma. Miss Wilson is very proper, and she is as cross as a bear when she hears me say anything like—"

"Never mind repeating it again, but tell me where you have learned them?"

Miss Lillian hesitated a moment, then demurely replied: "I hear uncle Ed say them."

Edmund laughed aloud, but Mrs. Burton was plainly annoyed, and gave Lillian a short lecture on self-improvement, and the importance of retaining all the good one reads and hears, and the equal importance of rejecting the bad.

"Now tell me," she added, "why you refused to let Bartlett put you to bed?"

"Because I didn't want to go," was the prompt reply. "I wanted to wait up until auntie Laura comes, for I'm going to sleep with her to-night. She said I might, and she said if I lie quiet until morning and don't kick or pull the bed-clothes off, that I might sleep with her every night after this; and I guess I can for sure, for I was nine years old yesterday and most likely my kicking days are over."

"Lillian, your expressions are sometimes positively shocking. What is Miss Wilson thinking about to permit them. I hope I have not engaged her in vain, although I must admit it looks like it. As for your aunt Laura, even her example is not always of the best; and when you are her age, I hope you will not take after her in the hours you keep or in the people you mingle with."

“I am sure auntie Laura would not mingle with any one who was not good,” replied Lillian, with some spirit.

“I don’t mean to say that they are not good in their way,” returned Mrs. Burton, “but mere goodness is not all that is essential; and inasmuch as you are such a favorite with Laura, I wish you would try to persuade her to give up those revival meetings in that tabernacle.”

“Auntie Laura is not at the tabernacle,” replied Lillian. “She is at that nice little chapel where so many green vines grow, and lots of nice people besides her go there, too.”

“Lillian does not know,” said Helen in a positive tone, “for I am quite sure Laura is at the tabernacle.”

“I *do* know,” retorted Lillian, “and she is *not* there. You only say so because—because—”

“Because what?” asked Edmund.

“Because only yesterday aunt Helen said a lot of cranks go to the tabernacle, and she made fun of them; and now she says auntie Laura is there just to tease me.”

“How do you know Laura is at the chapel?” asked Mrs. Burton.

“Because she said she was going there. I guess she likes the people and the service at the chapel better than she does where she goes with us Sundays.”

“Why so, Queen Lil?” asked Edmund.

“Don’t call me that, please. I’m not black, and

I'm not much of a Queen either, when I'm only allowed to sit up until eight o'clock. I do think," she proceeded in a grieved tone, "that I might be allowed to sit up until nine now, since I am nine years old. Eight o'clock was well enough when I was only eight, but I am sure it's not asking much to want another hour for each year."

"Then when you are ten I suppose you will want to remain up until ten, and so on?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when you are twelve you will want to sit up until midnight?"

"You do, and aunt Helen does, and auntie Laura, and sometimes grandma."

"And you expect when you are twelve years old to do just as we grown-up people do—is that it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And when you are thirteen," asked Helen, "what then?"

"Why then I'll stay up until thir—until one o'clock," she added with a triumphant air.

"And so on until you remain up all night and never go to bed at all," said Mrs. Burton. "Well, I must say you are a very silly little girl, and do not know what is best for you. By the time you are thirteen I hope you will be wiser."

"If she is not," said Helen, "I do hope, mother, that you will still insist upon her going to bed at eight; in fact six would please me better, for I assure you, Miss Pert," (addressing herself to Lillian) "that as it is we see quite too much of you."

"Auntie Laura never talks to me like that," returned Lillian with a pout, "and she likes to have me around, and she'll be glad to see me when she comes."

"Undoubtedly; Laura's taste is decidedly peculiar."

"I beg pardon—her taste is better than yours, and—"

"There, there," interrupted Mrs. Burton, "don't be rude, Lillian, or I shall ring for Bartlett to put you to bed immediately."

"I wish you would, mother," said Helen. "I don't see why you hesitate. That child is actually spoiled; she has her own way in everything and keeps the house in a constant uproar. Laura is the only one who can do anything with her."

"That's because auntie Laura is good to me," broke in this precocious child. "She don't find fault with me all the time. She tells me in a nice way what to do, and what not to do, and I mind her."

"Did you ever hear such impudence from a child of her age," demanded Helen. "Really, she is becoming unbearable."

"Lillian," said Edmund, with a view to changing the conversation, "you did not tell me why Laura likes the chapel service better than the service in our own church."

"I guess she thinks the chapel belongs to the Lord," answered Lillian, "and is not so much 'our church,' as the one where we go; and I guess she thinks the people there mean what they say, and what

they pray about, more than they do in 'our church.' "

"Did Laura tell you that?" asked Helen, contemptuously.

"No, she did not. I know it for myself. I've been with her twice, and I've been to 'our church' lots of times, and I've seen the people come in and kneel down and begin to pray. Anyway their lips moved, but they kept looking all around the church, so I guess their thoughts were not very much on what they made believe they were thinking about."

"Lillian, you are getting to be perfectly incorrigible," said Mrs. Burton. "I really do not know what course to pursue with you."

"What does 'incorrigible' mean, grandma?" asked the child meekly.

"It means being disobedient, perverse, and unmanageable, the same as you are."

Lillian came closer to Mrs. Burton and threw her arms lovingly around her neck. "I don't mean to be disobedient, or any of the other big words you mentioned," she said contritely; "but sometimes aunt Helen and uncle Ed do *expuate* me so that—"

"Exasperate, you mean," suggested Mrs. Burton.

"Yes, that's the word. I couldn't quite say it. Well, they do, and every bit of blame is laid to auntie Laura. And even you, grandma dear, always seem to find fault with her, and—"

"There, that will do!" exclaimed Mrs. Burton somewhat sternly. "You have said quite enough

on the subject. Were you any other than my dear Rosalind's only child I fear I should be compelled to surrender you into other hands. You are too much of a moral burden for mine."



## CHAPTER II.



JUST then the street door bell rang.

“O, auntie Laura has come!” exclaimed Lillian joyously as she rushed toward the door, nearly knocking the dignified footman down in her eagerness to get there ahead of him. A moment later she returned to the music-room, dragging Miss Laura Burton with her.

“Do come in, auntie dear,” she was saying, while tugging at her aunt’s hand, “and let grandma know you have come, ’cause she’s worried. We’re all in there, and there’s no company; so don’t go up stairs—never mind your hat and cloak.”

Laura Burton was a distinguished looking girl of twenty-two, with a pleasing face and charming manner. Her entrance into the room was greeted by a severe look from her mother, a careless nod from Helen, and a provoking smile from Edmund. But Laura, thoroughly accustomed to such greetings, smiled graciously upon her nine-year-old niece, who busied herself with first removing her hat and furs, then unbuttoning her gloves.

Presently Mrs. Norman Burton spoke. “Lillian,” she said, “if you have finished, and can be

quiet for a few moments, I would like Laura's attention. Laura," she proceeded in an imperious tone, "I wish you would come here where I can speak more easily."

Laura unhesitatingly rose and took a seat near her mother, Lillian following and clinging to her.

"I wish to impress you with the fact," said Mrs. Burton, "that I am greatly displeased with your conduct. What possible explanation can you make for being out so late? Do you not consider it disgraceful? Did you not realize that it would displease me? and by what right do you keep my horses and coachman out this cold night?"

"Mother," replied Laura calmly, "I am very sorry to have displeased you; I certainly did not do so voluntarily. I admit that I should not be out at this late hour alone, but it seemed impossible for me to come sooner. As for Thompson and the horses, however, they were comfortable in a warm stable."

"What stable, pray?"

"I really don't know — probably Thompson does; he stabled them."

"By whose orders?"

"By mine."

"You took an unwarranted liberty, and I am tempted to forbid you the carriage again except when you accompany me."

"I had no intention of taking a liberty," replied Laura. "I only thought to make the horses comfortable."



"Now, grandma," said Lillian, coaxingly, "you know you are glad the poor horses were not out in the cold, and you are only cross because auntie Laura had them. Now if uncle Ed or aunt Helen had —"

"Lillian Chester!" exclaimed Mrs. Burton, sternly, "go to your aunt Helen and sit down, and do not speak again to-night unless you are spoken to." Mrs. Burton seemed more displeased with her favorite than she had ever been before, as Lillian readily saw, and without a word she obeyed. Helen bent lower over her music, while Edmund critically examined the strings of a violin.

"Now, Laura," continued her mother, "explain to me if you can where you were to-night until half after ten."

"I was attending a church service until after nine," replied Laura, "then I started for home. On the way I saw a poor old horse lying in the street, hitched to a heavy load of furniture and being unmercifully beaten by the brutal driver. I could not endure the sight and ordered Thompson to interfere. Then the man became abusive and vented his rage all the more on the poor horse."

"Well, what then?"

"I left the carriage, called a policeman and had the man arrested."

"Very interesting indeed," was Mrs. Burton's sarcastic comment. "And pray what next?"

"The poor beast was so badly bruised, and more dead than alive, that I had it unhitched from the load and taken to a stable for treatment."

"What became of the furniture?" asked Edmund.

"The owner was there and I presume he looked after it," replied Laura.

"It is very strange to me," said Mrs. Burton, "that you are always running into some disagreeable adventure. Last night you found a dog with a broken leg, which must needs require your attention. The night before it was a half-starved cat with a litter of young kittens, and they too must be attended by you. Why do you always manage to see these disagreeable sights? Why interest yourself in them? Why does Helen not meet with similar experiences? She never sees these repulsive things; never makes herself conspicuous, nor disgraces me by her associations with low bred truck-drivers and wretched animals that might better be dead than alive."

"Yes," repeated Laura, with intense feeling in her voice, "they might far better be dead than alive; their untold suffering which I witness so often cannot be expressed, and might better be ended."

"Why witness it, then? why discommode yourself to look it up? Helen never does — why should you? Why are you so unlike your sister, so unlike me?"

"Because I am like my father," said Laura, quietly.

For the moment this unexpected answer silenced Mrs. Burton and set her to thinking.

"You ask why I see these repulsive sights," continued Laura. "I see them because they exist everywhere. Were I to go about blindly, would it alter the fact of their existence? No; the distress and suffering would go on just the same, only to a greater degree, for I have the satisfaction of knowing that in a quiet way I have brought relief and even comfort to hundreds of isolated cases among human beings and dumb animals as well."

"You are quite a philanthropist," remarked Helen ironically.

"You are an extremist, Laura," said Mrs. Burton. "Philanthropy is very commendable in venerable old gentlemen retired from the financial cares of life, but in a young woman of your age it is decidedly unbecoming; it savors of new-womanism and a desire for vulgar notoriety."

"Mother," returned Laura with calm dignity, "no one can accuse me of any such desire. And I cannot see what age or sex has to do with relieving distress. To my mind it would be far more commendable in a person to begin a life of philanthropy when young, and go through life 'scattering seeds of kindness' rather than wait until one's earthly career is nearly ended."

"We will not discuss the matter further," said Mrs. Burton coldly. "You may not seek that sort of notoriety, but you cannot avoid it if you continue as you have been doing. Your acts of 'philanthropy' will appear in the daily papers associated with truck-drivers and tenement houses;

with probably a police court as the climax, mortifying me beyond expression. But to all I have said you show an utter disregard; and to prove to you that this cannot continue with impunity, I have decided to resort to measures which will compel you to heed my wishes."

A look of wonder and inquiry was visible in Laura's eyes but she made no comment.

"I have resolved," continued Mrs. Burton, "to cut down your allowance to a figure which will no longer enable you to pursue your 'philanthropic career,' as you are pleased to term it."

Laura looked incredulous. "O mother," she cried, "you surely will not do that!"

"Yes," was the reply, "I shall do just that, and nothing less. It has been a dollar here to some old woman to pay her for harboring a stray cat for you, five dollars there to board a waif of a dog until its owner could be found, with another dollar or two added to advertise for the owner; and it's been ten dollars time and time again to recompense some wretched man who was deprived of his horse for a day or two while it was being examined by your orders to see if it were fit to work. It's absurd! It's almost an insanity for a girl of your station in life to be so eccentric, and it's high time your allowance was taken away."

A look of indignation came to the girl's face. "Mother," she began in a low intense tone, "it would be cruel—more cruel than you know—to place me in so false a position, and to subject me to

such humiliation ; for there are people depending on my promise for relief on the day I receive my allowance."

"They will no doubt survive their disappointment, and learn that in future they must exist without your assistance the same as they would had they never heard of you. I am not a heartless woman by any means. I do not like to see distress any more than you do. I wish there were no such conditions in life as distress, poverty or suffering ; but inasmuch as there are, and I cannot prevent them, I wisely keep aloof and do not disquiet my peace of mind."

"You act your own pleasure in the matter, mother," returned Laura, "and why not give me the same privilege? If it pleases me to spend part of my allowance in a humane way rather than spend it all on myself for unnecessary luxuries, why not let me do so?"

"For the reason that I am resolved to end all this eccentric nonsense at once. There is no knowing to what extremes your mania would carry you if left to your own discretion. What do you think I heard about you one day last week? You have no idea, indeed? Well, I was told on good authority that you were seen going into a back-yard in a tenement district, accompanied by a disreputable-looking woman carrying a basket on her sleeveless arm ; and it was said that the basket contained a sick cat. Is that report correct?"

"Yes, it is perfectly correct."

“And yet you expect me to give you an allowance to continue that sort of business! Are you insane? Have you no pride? What do you think of yourself anyway?”

“I am not insane,” returned Laura proudly, “nor am I lacking in pride; and I think myself doing better than those who spied on my actions and reported them to you.”

Ignoring her daughter's remark Mrs. Burton continued: “What do you suppose young Mrs. Hemmingway or any of ‘our set’ would think were they to know of your improprieties?”

“What they would think does not interest me,” replied Laura. “As for Mrs. Hemmingway, I care little for what her opinions would be.”

“Mrs. Hemmingway is very popular this season,” remarked Helen. “Her toilettes are quite the rage, and the admiration of everyone.”

“Her toilettes!” repeated Laura. “Yes, I know that Mrs. Hemmingway is noted—not for her kindness or generosity, but—for her marvelous toilettes! Her chief ambition seems to be to win the admiration of men, and to be a leader of fashion. Even that wonderful creation which adorned her head when she called here last Thursday, represented the slaughter of three bright colored song-birds. Does that fact give her an unpleasant thought? No indeed; she is, I think, too selfish and unscrupulous to trouble herself about anything so long as her own personal vanity is gratified. I like to dress well too; but I would

despise myself if I had no higher ambition than to adorn my person with a view to outrivalling others. Why then should I care for her opinion or for the opinion of any one like her?"

"It seems to me you are very uncharitable in your denunciation of people, particularly of Mrs. Hemmingway," said Helen.

"I don't wish to be," replied Laura. "I dislike to think or speak ill of any one, but I am dealing with facts. Mrs. Hemmingway said that she was not particularly interested in any one or anything; that she found 'self' quite all she had time or inclination to think of or attend to. And when a person talks like that do you think her opinions are worth considering—except when they agree with your own? Besides, she told me that she both disliked and feared all animals. And yet at that very moment she was clothed from head to foot at animals' expense. Her head gear she owed to song-birds. Her feet were dressed in the hide of one animal, her costly furs represented another. Her hands were incased in the skin of a third, while her fashionable gown of silk and wool represented the original covering of some species of sheep together with the labor of the silkworm; and last, though not least, she wore a jacket of baby Persian lamb. And yet Mrs. Hemmingway dislikes and fears animals—unless they are dead."

"Perhaps Mrs. Hemmingway is not aware of what is said in regard to the mode of procuring baby Persian lamb," said Mrs. Burton.

"Possibly so," returned Laura. "Still I doubt

if the knowledge would prevent her wearing it so long as it is fashionable."

Helen suddenly turned from her piano. "Laura," she asked, "why are you so opposed to baby Persian lamb? It certainly is beautiful, and I am only hoping mother will give me a jacket of it even if you don't want one."

An indignant light shot from Laura's fine eyes. "Can you realize what a jacket of baby Persian lamb means, Helen?" she demanded. "Do you know that every jacket is said to represent the cruel death of from thirty to forty unborn lambs, to say nothing of the equally cruel death of the mothers?"

"All furs represent the death of animals," replied Helen, "and why is the death of the Persian lamb any worse than that of others?"


"Because it is much more horrible and cruel," replied Laura. "To secure the finest specimens for the market the unborn lamb is taken from its mother alive and skinned." Turning to her mother Laura earnestly asked if she approved of it.

"No," said Mrs. Burton, "I do not. At one time I admired it very much and fully intended to buy you and Helen each a jacket of it. About that time, however, I read, on what seemed to be indisputable authority, the revolting manner in which it is obtained, and the knowledge so shocked me that I abandoned the idea and will not countenance its use."

Helen turned to her piano completely silenced. Mrs. Burton's will was law in that household, and never had she spoken so earnestly on any subject of the kind before.



### CHAPTER III.

“OU have not yet explained your connection with the sick cat which your street maid was seen carrying last week,” remarked Mrs. Burton, as though to change the subject and neutralize any expression of undue sentiment which may have escaped her.

“I found the poor creature suffering terribly,” answered Laura. “Some fiendish person had thrown boiling water on it, scalding it nearly to death. I found it lying on the pavement and I sent the woman to a drug store for some linseed oil and lime water, hoping that its application to the wounds would ease the pain until it could be mercifully killed. All that might disgrace me in the eyes of such people as Mrs. Victor Hemmingway; but there are people—grand, noble, broad-minded people—who would not consider me disgraced, and who under similar circumstances would do the very same themselves.”

“Never mind moralizing,” said Mrs. Burton coldly. “There is another matter I wish explained. I was in your dressing-room to-day, and made a discovery. On your table was a bottle supposed to contain wood violet, but to my horror I observed

that it was labeled 'chloroform.' Think of it! Chloroform—poison! on a young lady's dressing-table. Have you any defense for that?"

"I have," was the calm reply. "I bought it only yesterday for a woman who is actively engaged in a humane cause."

"Killing cats for a living, I suppose," and Mrs. Burton's manner plainly showed disgust, but Laura was perfectly composed.

Helen raised her hands in dismay. "I do hope," she exclaimed, "that you would not be guilty of anything so shocking."

"Not under ordinary circumstances certainly," Laura answered.

"I would not do it under any circumstances," returned Helen, "it is too degrading."

"It cannot be your sympathy that would prevent you," replied Laura. "Would you permit an innocent animal to suffer for fear it would 'degrade' you to humanely put it out of the way?"

Helen made no answer.

"What logic! What a world of prejudice we live in!" remarked Laura. "Good deeds never degrade anyone. Mother asks why you never interest yourself in these things. I can tell her why. It is because you are not interested in any thing which does not please you; unpleasant things you avoid. You are indifferent to the misery around you because it would 'degrade' you to notice it, and yet you respond to the cry of the heathen ten thousand miles away. That is the kind of generosity, Helen, which you sometimes indulge in."

"I have heard quite enough lecture," replied Helen, turning to her piano. "I find this opera far more interesting, so please excuse me."

"Come, Lillian," said Laura, rising; "it is time you were in bed."

"Be seated a moment," said Mrs. Burton, "I wish to ask what inducement draws you to that chapel so often of late?"

Laura could have answered: "My home is unpleasant; I find no sympathy, no congeniality here. On no subject do we agree. The chapel is restful, its influence pleasing." But she merely said: "The Reverend Mr. Haviland is delivering a course of lectures there which are very interesting. But if you disapprove—"

"O no, I don't disapprove," interrupted Mrs. Burton in an injured tone. "Go if you like. This is the Lenten season; there's nothing going on, and you might as well be at the chapel as here."

Mrs. Burton, cold and unresponsive, was incapable of awakening in her children that affection which many parents possess. As a fine-looking woman, cultured and somewhat gifted, they admired her; as their mother they obeyed her, but there was a total lack of loving confidence between them.

Their education had been carefully accomplished, and their knowledge of the world acquired by their mother's social position and their frequent trips abroad. Mrs. Burton's villa at Newport was a centre of social triumphs for Miss Helen, whose ambitions were unlimited; while her sister Laura, more

thoughtful, less frivolous, surrounded herself with a circle of charming friends whose admiration for her was sincere. Among the prominent members of her set was a Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse, an elderly lady of great wealth, who understood Laura's exceptional disposition and admired her accordingly. Being one of Mrs. Burton's most intimate acquaintances she knew something of the unpleasant features of Laura's home-life, and many times in strict confidence she had told Laura not to hesitate to let her know if she could be of any service, and in a material way prove her friendship.

A few days after the discussion just recorded, Edmund and Helen received their usual quarterly allowance, while Laura was cut off with an amount only sufficient for glove money and stationery. The fact staggered her. She had believed until the last moment that her mother would relent and not carry out her threat.

A gleam of indignation came to her eyes. She could not submit without protest to this arbitrary act. "Mother," she said imploringly, "if my father were living this would never occur. He knew my sympathies were with the unfortunate, with the deserving poor, and with defenceless animals. He never reproved me for even an impulsive act in their behalf, but always encouraged in me that of which you disapprove. Could he have looked ahead he would have done very differently from what he did. He left you in absolute control of everything, and financially speaking you can do with me as you see fit; but have I no moral rights? Must I—"

“Do you realize to whom you are speaking, Laura? How dare you criticise your father’s actions?”

“I don’t criticise my *father’s* actions,” replied Laura. “I loved him dearly and he loved me, and if he could only speak now, I am sure he would beg you to be less severe.”

“I wish you to understand,” retorted Mrs. Burton, “that your father would not approve of your acting in opposition to my wishes, and I shall exercise my authority as long as you dwell beneath my roof.”

Edmund smiled. Mrs. Burton’s children well knew there was no hope of any one of them ever leaving the maternal roof unless in open defiance to her wishes. Although cold and unresponsive she was peculiarly opposed to their separating from her, and schemes of a matrimonial nature were never for one moment entertained.

“Mother,” replied Laura, “I do not wilfully displease you. I admit having done things of which you disapprove, but which my father would have commended.” A sudden passion came to her voice. “I have also done things which you must commend,” she said. “You permitted poor old Rodney, father’s favorite horse, to be sold at public auction, because he had grown old and was no longer admired. I traced him after the sale into the hands of a brutal cab-driver and found him at his stand in Park Avenue, jaded and half-starved, standing in the burning sun. The old fellow knew

me when I spoke to him and actually whinnied with joy. The thought of the faithful creature having to end his days in such a manner, like poor 'Ginger' in 'Black Beauty,' was not to be tolerated, and I bought him of the cabman by paying ten dollars more than what he gave for him."

Mrs. Burton had no defense. She well knew that her daughter's act would have met her husband's sanction; she therefore maintained a rigid silence. Edmund, however, showed some interest in the matter by asking where Rodney was.

"He is in a suburban town not far away," replied Laura, "owned by a gentle old lady who takes a short drive with him every pleasant day. She loves him dearly and will keep him until he dies a natural death."

"I say, Laura, that was very clever of you, don't you know," returned Edmund. "To tell the truth I'm awfully glad to hear it. I've often wondered what became of old Rod. Why didn't you let us know about him before?"

"I was not aware that his fate would interest you," replied Laura. "You certainly did not object to his being sold, and since the new span came you have never mentioned him."

"The new span are fine as silk."

"Yes, and so was Rodney once. You admire the new ones now, and are proud of them; but the time may come when they will be less valuable. Will your present feelings serve them when they need sympathy rather than admiration?"

Edmund made an evasive reply. By nature he was quite unlike his sister Helen, and under proper training many noble qualities might have been developed; but they remained dormant. He saw only one side of life, was taught to shun the other; and not possessing that force of character or originality of thought of his sister Laura, to see, to think, to act for himself, he readily yielded to the influences around him.

Laura made one more appeal to her mother, "Will you not relent," she pleaded, "knowing as you do how important my allowance is to me?"

Mrs. Burton sat gazing into the fire but made no answer.

"Mother," she exclaimed in sudden desperation, "you are unjust to me because of a mere prejudice—a prejudice which is unworthy of you, and which in the name of the unfortunate, whether human or animal, should not exist."

Finally Mrs. Burton spoke. "I do not censure you for your action in the case of Rodney," she said; "but there are no more 'Rodneys' to interest you at present, and should there be, you will kindly refer to me instead of assuming the responsibility yourself."

"And my allowance, mother, will you give me that as usual?"

"No, I shall not. You already have my decision."

Laura turned away; further argument was useless. Her *protégés* must exist as best they could until she devised other means for their relief.

"Auntie dear," said Lillian when they were alone, "do you not love our beautiful horses?"

"Certainly, child; but they are treated like princes and are in no need of sympathy. But the poor creatures so often seen on the streets, heavily laden and at the mercy of cruel drivers, overworked, ill-fed and neglected, are enough to arouse the sympathy of any one not utterly heartless. Every one of those horses has a history, and too often a sad one. 'Black Beauty' told his and published it broadcast, doing worlds of good."

"Why don't all horses have their history published too, auntie Laura?"

"All horses are not so wise or so fortunate as 'Black Beauty,' but as his story includes the history of several others, a person has only to read it to obtain a pretty fair insight into horse life, with its trials and its pleasures. Every one should read it, particularly the boys and girls who will be the men and women of the near future."





## CHAPTER IV.



ON Easter Sunday, amid the throng of fashionable worshippers who emerged from an aristocratic up-town church, was the Burton family, including Miss Lillian Chester.

A long line of well appointed equipages lined the street in front of the church, extending nearly a block on either side. A close observer would have readily detected the restless manner of most of the horses attached to those various equipages.

Their heads were forced back and held in an unnatural and cruel position; many were foaming at the mouth, and only a few of them had been spared the mutilation of their tails.

Laura Burton had seen all this many times before, but the recent conversations with her mother, together with her unfortunate financial condition, while her actions were curtailed, only caused her sentiments to find expression in words which otherwise would have remained unuttered. As it was, the cruel customs prevalent in the best society were often the subject of her adverse and penetrating criticism.

“Look at those magnificent greys just ahead of

us," she said in a low tone while stepping into the carriage.

"What about them?" inquired Helen.

"See their heads; look at their foaming mouths and their docked tails. These people have just listened to a sermon on the resurrection of Christ, and His gentle kindness; they pretend to believe in His teachings. Can they for one moment imagine the gentle, loving Christ approving of such unkindness, unnecessary and cruel, and all for the purpose of gratifying a personal vanity, or because of a fashionable fad? People who commit, or cause to be committed such wanton cruelty and call themselves Christians, are they not hypocrites?"

"Please be a little moderate in your language," suggested Mrs. Burton.

To do Mrs. Burton justice it may be stated that her own horses were neither docked nor high checked. Mr. Burton, when living, had strenuously objected to both practices as not to be tolerated among humane people, and his wife had sufficient regard for the memory of the man who had left her his millions without reserve, to carry out his wishes in the matter. In all other respects, however, Mrs. Norman Burton was extremely fashionable. Her charities also were munificent; at least her name was prominent as patroness of several well-known charitable institutions. Her pew in church was one of the highest priced, and her contributions to church work, particularly among the foreign missions, were generous and frequent, for which she—

like too many others—considered herself a very righteous woman, and hoped that her place in heaven was secured. But there her charities and obligations ended, and her conscience was serenely calm.

“Laura,” said Helen during the homeward drive, “I think it very unbecoming of you to be so pronounced in your opinions, and to criticise other people as severely as you do. Why not let them do with their horses as they please—it’s their affair, not yours.”

“Aunt Helen,” spoke up Lillian, “I remember once you put on a new dress, and the collar was too high or too stiff, and you made a great fuss because it felt so uncomfortable, and you wouldn’t wear it. So just think, please, of those poor horses with their heads and necks held so high and stiff, and they have to draw a load besides, and run as fast as they can go.”

Lillian’s well-directed comparison evidently was lost on Helen, who, ignoring her remark, changed the subject to converse with her mother.

A few days later on leaving the luncheon table, Mrs. Burton ordered her carriage to be in readiness at three o’clock.

“We must call on Mrs. Almon Harding,” she explained to her daughters. “To-day is her ‘at home,’ and Madeline and Isabel are soon going to Germany with their aunt, and I wish to call before they go.”

At the appointed hour Laura, with a little smile of triumph, presented herself at her mother’s room

for inspection. Mrs. Burton gave her a rapid glance, then raised her hands in dismay.

"Laura Burton!" she exclaimed; "what do you mean by wearing such disreputable gloves?"

"I upturned a drawer full," replied Laura, "and these were the choice."

Mrs. Burton looked incredulous.

"Positively," continued Laura, "I have not a single pair which have not been worn. I have several pairs which have been worn only once, and are but slightly soiled; but they would not match this gown, and this is the one you requested me to wear."

"Why is Zoa so lax?—why has she permitted things to come to such a pass?" asked Mrs. Burton.

"Zoa is not responsible. I am looking after the glove department of my wardrobe myself," replied Laura.

"Evidently, judging from the result," observed Helen, who at that moment sailed in, faultlessly attired.

"I wish you would follow your sister's example," said Mrs. Burton. "It would save me a world of annoyance."

"Helen has nothing to do except look after her personal appearance," returned Laura.

"And what have you to do except look after yours?" asked Helen.

"Many things," was the reply. "Dress, and dress alone, can never be an all-absorbing thought with me."

“You will please attend to the question in hand,” said Mrs. Burton imperiously. “On the first of the month I gave you a liberal supply of glove money, and yet you have not an unworn pair. What does it mean?”

“Simply that before I knew you were going to deprive me of my allowance I had promised assistance to several worthy persons, and the keeping of that promise took every dollar; consequently I had nothing to buy gloves with.”

Mrs. Burton deigned no reply, but led the way to her carriage.

“Thompson,” she said, addressing the coachman, “drive to number —— Broadway as quickly as possible.”

The address given was that of a well-known glove establishment, where Mrs. Burton alighted. “What number do you wear, Laura?” she asked coldly.

“Five and three-quarters.”

Mrs. Burton entered the shop and returned with a package which she handed her. “Never again,” she said severely, “let me find you without a fresh supply, or in future I shall withhold even your glove money and buy whatever you require myself.”

As they drove away Laura opened the package, and from a dozen pairs selected one for immediate use and proceeded to draw them on.

“Thirty-six dollars for gloves,” she thought bitterly, “and Mrs. Alden last night had no money to buy food, and Nero her dog was hungry, and she

in despair over the probability of having to part with him."

Early in May the Burtons left the city to occupy their country residence on the Hudson, which was within easy access of New York. The place was a charming one and had belonged to the Burton family for years. Helen was displeased with the arrangement; she preferred going abroad, or to their Newport house. But Mrs. Burton decided on her estate called "Wildwood."

"It will be insufferably dull here," grumbled Helen the week after they arrived. "I could pass a month very pleasantly; but a whole summer in such isolation seems out of the question."

"We have nice neighbors," said Lillian, "and we can get acquainted with them."

"What do you know about our neighbors?" asked Helen.

"I know a lot about them, because I've seen them; at least I've seen Mr. Cornell. Bartlett took me there and she says he's very rich, and I guess he is because he lives in a grand house. And Bartlett said he would be a great 'catch' for somebody. I asked what that meant, but she wouldn't tell. What does it mean, grandma?"

"I suppose Bartlett meant that Mr. Cornell was a very eligible man and would be a desirable husband. But she should not speak of such things to you; it is very improper."

Helen had suddenly become interested. "Very

likely Mr. Cornell is already married," she said. "Have you been there, Lillian?"

"I've been in the grounds, but I never went into the house. Sophie—she's the girl Bartlett went to see—came outside and talked to us, and she brought me oranges and almonds and cakes, and she's a very nice girl."

"Your idea of 'nice' is evidently gauged by your stomach," said Helen. "But tell me, did you see any of the ladies of the house or anyone who might be Mrs. Cornell?"

"No, I didn't see any ladies at all. I only saw the servants, Sophie and Katie and Lizzie, and a big fat woman they called Smithers. And I saw Peter and a boy called Joe, but I didn't see—I mean I didn't see any Mrs. Cornell, nor hear about her, and I guess there isn't any."

"Who is Joe, and who is Peter?" asked Laura, entering the room.

"They are Mr. Cornell's servants," replied Lillian, "and Mr. Cornell lives in that big house with the park around it over there. I went to it with Bartlett, and had a lovely time, and, O yes, I forgot, Mr. Cornell has a stable full of horses, and a lot of dogs, big shaggy ones, and he has tame rabbits, and two lovely cats, and a beautiful stag with long horns, and one without horns."

"Did you see Mr. Cornell?" asked Helen.

"Yes, I saw him and he spoke to me and asked my name and where I lived, and he asked me to come again. He is a very nice man, only he is too

old. His hair is as white as snow and it stands up straight all over his head like bristles, only it's real short."

"Quite a description of a pompadour," said Laura, laughingly.

Helen returned to her needle-work,—her interest in Mr. Cornell was short-lived. An old man of Lillian's description was not her ideal, nor worth becoming interested in.

Early one evening Lillian sought her aunt Laura in a state of great excitement. "O auntie!" she exclaimed, "I almost hate uncle Edmund! Do come and see what he has done."

Following the child to the rear garden she found her brother in hunting costume admiring a string of bright colored birds which he had shot.

"O Edmund!" she exclaimed impulsively. "How could you be so cruel? Song birds, too, and killed for mere sport."

"Why, they're regular beauties, Laura; never saw a finer shooting—begin to think I'm a crack shot—brought down one every time."

"And that is all it signifies to you," returned his sister. "How cruel you sportsmen are! What savage traits you still possess! How the savage instincts within you still thirst for blood and seek something to kill!"

"I say, Laura, you're too hard on a fellow. To-day's shooting has given me quite a little uneasiness."

"In what way?"



“Well, I tried to wing a robin, but only succeeded in wounding it and it got away. To tell the truth I felt really sorry for the little thing, don’t you know, and tried to find it in order to finish the job, but couldn’t.”

“And so that suffering bird is left to die like that!” exclaimed Laura. “And now it is dark, and nothing can be done. I should think, Edmund,” she proceeded with flashing eyes, “that if you have one spark of humanity, this would be a lesson to you for life.”

Early the next morning, unknown to any one, Laura went to the place where Edmund had shot the robin, and soon saw one fluttering about on the ground in evident excitement and distress, while from a tree came the faint chirrup of young birds. She quickly captured the old bird and discovered that one of its wings was broken, and covered with blood.

“You poor thing,” she exclaimed, “left to die where you can hear the despairing cry of your young and are unable to reach them!”

She saw the nest but it was beyond her reach. For a moment she stood irresolute, then hurriedly turned toward home intending to bring help. But just then something opportune occurred, saving her the trouble. From through the wood a large dog came bounding toward her. On seeing Laura he paused in surprise. His face was kindly, and she spoke to him, whereupon he wagged his tail in friendly greeting, and came up to her.

The next moment a gentleman emerged from the wood, closely followed by another dog. Dog number two, without any ceremony ran up to dog number one, and in that manner drew his master's attention to the fact that a lady stood there. He was a rather handsome man of some twenty-seven years, with brown hair and mustache, and dark-blue eyes whose expression was frank, kindly and generous. Nevertheless, as Laura looked at him she became indignant, for he carried a gun. Perhaps he then, and not Edmund, was the guilty person.

He saw her patting his favorite's head, politely raised his cap and turned to pass on. But Laura unhesitatingly asked if he would assist her a moment.

"Certainly, with pleasure," he replied. "Only command me."

"Some one has fatally wounded this robin," she said, "and its young are left in their nest to starve. If you can devise some means to reach them I shall esteem it a great favor."

Her tone contained an indignant ring, which to his surprise seemed directed at him personally. Soon he placed the nest in her hands. It contained four young robins, one already dead the others weak and dying.

"May I ask what you intend to do with them?"

"Certainly; I intend to destroy them," she replied.

"Destroy them?" he repeated incredulously.

"Yes, and finish in a merciful manner the work that some gun so cruelly began."

“Poor thing,” he said while carefully examining the wounded wing. “It is indeed a brutal act to wound a nesting bird.”

“Then you did not do it?” she asked impulsively.

“I? no indeed. I never shot a bird in my life.” His tone was convincing, yet she involuntarily glanced toward the gun which lay upon the ground. He understood the look, understood her manner, and hastened to convince her of her error.

“That gun is mine, I admit,” he said; “but if it could speak it would tell you that it has never taken the life of any bird except an occasional hawk about to swoop down on some weaker bird. I have no inclination to destroy the life of either birds or animals.”

A rapid change swept over Laura's face, and from thinking her severe and imperious, he saw her as a very lovely girl, with a sweet interesting face and a most charming personality.

“Will you tell me how you intend to destroy those birds?” he asked curiously.

“‘Destroy’ is a hard term to use in connection with them,” she replied. “I shall simply put them to sleep—a sleep so deep that they will never awaken.”

“Will you not find it a rather grewsome task?”

“Yes. It is dreadful—dreadful that such things must be done. My first experience was with a pet canary which flew into the gas and was severely burned. I knew that nothing could save

it, and yet it might suffer on for hours. At that time I had never taken the life of anything; the very thought was revolting. But I could not endure to see the poor bird suffer, nor could I endure to let any one else touch it. In my grief and desperation I secured some chloroform, and pouring a few drops on a handkerchief placed it in the cage close beside him. He did not even struggle. His breathing simply grew fainter, and in a moment his pain was over."

"You certainly pursued a merciful course," said the stranger. "Not every one would have the courage to do so. Many times really kind-hearted people permit suffering to be prolonged indefinitely because they lack the courage to end it."

"I thank you, sir, very kindly for your assistance," said Laura turning away. "I assure you it was a real favor."

"I am very glad to have been of service," he returned politely, "but if I can be of no further assistance I will bid you good morning." He raised his cap and soon disappeared among the trees.

That evening in the seclusion of her own apartments, Laura's mind reverted to the gentleman of her morning adventure. "I wonder who he is," she thought, "and where he lives, and if I were really rude to him? I do hope I was not."

## CHAPTER V.



AFTER luncheon the next day, Lillian came running to Laura, her face flushed with anger. "Auntie," she cried, "I think Mangin is the meanest chef in the world, and I wish grandma would get another and let him go this very day."

"What has Mangin done?" asked Laura.

"He's done lots, and he's going to do more, and he's going to tell tales about me to grandma and to aunt Helen. I don't mind his telling grandma so much, but aunt Helen is so disagreeable to me and scolds so much."

"Well, what is it? what have you done?"

"You know we had broiled lobster for luncheon," she began hesitatingly.

"Yes, I know."

"But, auntie, did you know that Mangin cooks the lobsters alive?"

There was no answer.

"Did you know it?" persisted the child.

"No, I did not. I have never given the matter a thought before."

"Well he does. He puts them on the hot broiler, and it is just awful to see the poor things squirm and suffer and try to get away until they're dead. I

was in the kitchen once before when he was cooking one, so I made up my mind that next time I'd fix it. So he promised to let me know, but he didn't know what I intended to do."

"Go on—what about it?"

"Well, I saw you chloroform the robins and it didn't hurt them at all, so I thought I'd chloroform the lobster. I wet my handkerchief in your bottle of chloroform and held it over his head till he didn't move, and when Mangin put him on the griddle he wondered why he didn't squirm. After luncheon I told him what I had done, and told him to always let me know when we were to have lobster. But he was awful mad and called me a meddlesome child, and told me to never come near the kitchen again. And he said he wouldn't chloroform the lobsters, that he'd cook them alive, and while he was talking he burned his hand on the range and you ought to have seen him jump. Then he poured oil over it, and had Katie tie it up. I asked him how he would like to be put on a hot griddle flat on his back, and be burned all over? and he said he would tell on me and ask Miss Wilson to not let me out of the school room at all, and — well I guess that's all he said; it's enough anyway."

"Don't be so excited," said Laura, "for I will see that your rights are not infringed on."

"I most knew you would take my part," said Lillian, giving her an affectionate hug, "and now I have something else to tell you. It's about *pate de foie gras*. Miss Wilson read to me out of a paper

that it is made in Strasburg, Germany. They make it out of geese livers, and they want the livers to grow as big as they can. So they put the poor geese to a 'death-dance.'"

"What do you mean by that?" asked Laura.

"I can't tell it as well as the paper did, but they have a big place built with a zinc floor, and under the floor is a fire just hot enough to keep the zinc hot, and then the geese are all stood on it in little pens so close together that they can't turn around nor move, except to lift up their feet, and the floor is so hot they can't stand still, and so they first raise one foot and then the other; and they keep that up day and night. They feed them some oily kind of food, and that and the heat, and they wedged in so tightly that they can't move about, makes their livers grow very large. Then they kill them and make *pate de foie gras* out of their livers, and the paper called it 'the death-dance of the geese.'"

"Horrible!" exclaimed Laura, "I wonder if it be true?"

"Yes auntie, it's true. Miss Wilson said so. I'll bring you the paper and you can see for yourself."

Away she ran and soon returned with a copy of a well-known New York daily. The article in question related in substance what Lillian had told, and claimed to be authentic.

"What a grewsome industry," thought Laura. "What torture those poor things must suffer before they are finally killed. I cannot believe these facts

are generally known. If they were it seems to me such an industry would be boycotted until those concerned became less greedy, and would use the geese as nature made them without resorting to such diabolical means to increase their profits."





## CHAPTER VI.



RS. Burton and her daughters were lounging on the piazza one afternoon when Miss Lillian Chester, just returning from a walk with her nurse, approached them holding out a box of candy.

“Do see what Mr. Cornell handed me through the fence,” she cried, “and he asked me why I didn’t come over there any more. And the other man who lives there asked me, too.”

“What did you tell them?” inquired Helen.

“I told them you wouldn’t let me, and that you said if I went there too often he might set the dogs on me.”

“You are a very malicious child,” said Helen, “and in future you keep away from Mr. Cornell’s entirely.”

“I am not a malicious child—I only told the truth; you did say so, and I’ll be glad when I wear long dresses, as you do, and satin corsets, and dotted veils; then I can go where I please and—”

“What did Mr. Cornell say to what you told him?” interrupted Helen.

“He said you evidently were not acquainted with your nearest neighbor, and the other man said so too.”

“Who is the ‘other man?’”

“I don’t know—I only know he’s a man, and he lives with Mr. Cornell.”

“A groom, perhaps,” suggested Helen.

“He’s not a groom, he’s — he’s — he’s a gentleman; and he’s nicer than Mr. Cornell himself, and younger too. And his hair isn’t white, and it don’t stick up straight all over his head as Mr. Cornell’s does.”

“I learned incidentally,” said Mrs. Burton, “that the Cornells are very desirable people to know and it might be well to cultivate them, particularly for summer neighbors. I once heard Mrs. Vernoyse speak of them as being an old Bostonian family, and these Cornells are the same, I believe.”

“It’s a pity they’re so old,” said Helen. “Mrs. Cornell, providing she exists, must be fifty or sixty, and quite uncompanionable for me.”

“I asked them to come and see us,” said Lillian. “I thought if we got acquainted with them you would let me go over there sometimes.”

“And whom do you mean by ‘them?’” asked Helen. “Do you mean Sophie and Peter, and all of your other servant acquaintances at ‘Glenmoyne?’”

“No, I do not. I only mean Mr. Cornell and the other man,” replied Lillian in a tone of offended dignity.

After school hours one afternoon the following week, Laura took her precocious niece out for a ramble in a shady spot a mile or so from “Wildwood.”

They each gathered a bouquet of wild flowers, then sat down on a mossy bank to rest. Soon Lillian uttered an exclamation of delight and bounded away. The next moment she was caressing two large dogs, and at the same time eagerly chatting with a gentleman whom Laura recognized as the one of her robin adventure. Presently they came toward her, Lillian leading the gentleman by the hand.

“O auntie Laura,” she cried, “here is the ‘other man,’ the one I told you lives at Mr. Cornell’s house. I told him you wanted to see him, so here he is.”

Laura flushed; the gentleman advanced, and politely raised his cap.

“Pardon me,” he said, “but my little friend here insisted that you wished to see me, and—” He suddenly paused, while a pleased light broke over his face. “It is indeed an unexpected pleasure,” he added, “to discover in my near neighbor the lady of the robins.”

Laura returned his greeting friendlily, then hastened to assure him that his ‘little friend’ had taken an unwarranted liberty, and while she was pleased to see him again, the invitation for him to come to her was issued without her knowledge or consent.

Lillian hung her head in momentary embarrassment, then demurely replied:

“But auntie, I told you the other day how nice he was, and how good to me; and I was sure you wanted to see him, and so I told him you did.”

They both laughed ; then Laura rather facetiously remarked : “ It seems, sir, that in spite of your apparently close friendship, Lillian does not even yet know your name, for she always speaks of you as ‘ the other man.’ ”

“ Why, my name is Cornell,” he replied, smiling.

“ It is ? ” asked Lillian in surprise. “ And is the man with the stiff white hair your father ? ”

“ O no. He is Major Upton, an old friend of my father, and being excellent company I have invited him to spend the summer with me at ‘ Glenmoyne.’ ”

“ And are you the *real* Mr. Cornell ? ” continued Lillian, “ the man who owns the house, and the horses, and the cats and dogs, and all the rest ? ”

“ Yes, I am the real Mr. Cornell of ‘ Glenmoyne,’ ” he replied, quite amused because of her earnest surprise, “ and the cats and dogs and ‘ all the rest,’ as you express it, belong to me.”

“ Well, I don’t see how I got it so mixed up, but I saw the white-haired man first, and I was sure he was Mr. Cornell, and then I saw you, and I thought that you were only—”

“ ‘ The other man,’ ” he interrupted, good-humoredly. “ Some visitor, perhaps, or some poor relation getting a free summer outing.”

“ My aunt Helen said perhaps you were the groom, and she said most likely you were married. Are you ? ”

“ Lillian,” said Laura reprovingly, “ your aunt Helen only said it playfully to tease you, and it’s very rude of you to repeat it.”

"I'll not do so again," the child returned meekly. "But are you?" she persisted, addressing Mr. Cornell.

"The groom, or married, which do you mean?"

"I know you are not the groom," she replied, with a worldly-wise air, "but perhaps you are married."

"Do you prefer me married or unmarried?" he asked smilingly.

"If your wife is as nice as you are," she returned innocently, "then I hope you are married. But if she isn't, and wouldn't like me to come there, then I hope you're not married."

"Very well," he answered playfully, "you may come to 'Glenmoyne' as often as you please; there is no Mrs. Cornell to like or dislike your coming."

They chatted a few minutes, then Laura reminded Lillian that it was time to go home.

"As we both go in the same direction," said Mr. Cornell, "I shall be pleased to walk with you if I am not intruding."

Assured to the contrary, they proceeded towards "Wildwood." During the walk they became quite well acquainted; far better because of Lillian, whose artless chatter would permit of no formality. On reaching the entrance Lillian begged Mr. Cornell to go in and remain to dinner.

"Do please come," she pleaded. "There's no one home except grandma and auntie Laura, and grandma promised that I might dine with them to-night; and it's so stupid, you know, with only three at the table, and those all women."

“What a compliment to your grandma, and to Miss Burton,” he said.

“Why, Lillian!” exclaimed Laura, “I never knew you thought either mother or me stupid. Really, you have not offered much of an inducement for Mr. Cornell to come in.”

Lillian grew scarlet. “I didn’t mean it that way,” she said simply. “You ask him to come in, auntie Laura. Most likely he’ll mind you, because you are grown up, and wear long dresses, and—”

Laura silenced her with a quick look, for fear she would add: “and satin corsets and dotted veils.”

Having no alternative Laura said frankly: “You are very welcome, Mr. Cornell; I am sure my mother would be pleased to know you. She feels somewhat isolated, I imagine, this season.”

Knowing the invitation to be forced he politely declined, pleading Major Upton as an excuse.

“Then come some other time,” chimed in Lillian, “and bring Major Upton with you. I think he is the nicest man—I mean the nicest old man,” she added quickly, “that I ever knew.”

Within a week Mr. Cornell made a formal call upon Mrs. Norman Burton, at which time he was informally invited with Major Upton to dinner for Thursday evening.

When the day came Lillian was superlatively happy, having received permission from Mrs. Burton to remain up that evening and dine with the others in the state dining-room, after having promised to be very quiet, and to not speak except when spoken to.

The dinner was progressing very satisfactorily ; Lillian, whose table manners were quite perfect, was keeping her promise most faithfully. Suddenly Major Upton asked her a question. She turned to Mrs. Burton and smiling sweetly said :

“ Grandma, dear, I’m spoken to ; please may I speak ? ”

“ Certainly ; have I not always told you to speak when spoken to ? ”

“ But grandma, dear, I was afraid you didn’t hear the Major speak to me, and would think I was speaking without leave, so I thought I’d let you know.”

They all laughed, and from that time on Miss Lillian was not compelled to suffer the hardship of keeping quiet, for both the Major and Mr. Cornell took special pains to ask her questions in order to hear her quaint answers.

During the evening the conversation drifted to a remarkable act which one of Mr. Cornell’s saddle horses was fond of performing. “ It is to stand up straight on his hind feet and walk a short distance,” said Mr. Cornell. “ He once attempted the trick when I was on his back. An acquaintance of mine who happened to be near took a snap shot at us, and I am often amused when looking at my undignified position with both arms clasped around the horse’s neck and clinging on for dear life.”

“ I hope my horse will never do that,” said Helen.

“ You ride, do you ? ” asked the Major.

“ Yes, almost every day. My sister and I each

have a fine saddle horse. We are fond of riding and of driving as well."

"You are fond of horses then, I presume?"

"O yes; I admire horses very much, and I should feel as lost without Juno, my saddle horse, as mother would without her span."

"Aunt Helen loves beautiful horses that can prance and show off," said Lillian, quite forgetting herself, "but auntie Laura loves old plugs best."

This remark caused a round of laughter, in which even Helen deigned to join.

"What do you know, little one, about 'old plugs?'" asked Major Upton, greatly amused.

"I heard Mangin—he's the chef—tell Katie that Mr. Harding's horses were getting to be regular old plugs, and I asked Mangin what plugs was—"

"What plugs were," corrected the Major.

"I meant 'were,'" proceeded the child with cheeks aglow, "and Mangin said plugs *were* old worn out horses, and those are the kind auntie Laura likes best."

"Lillian's ideas on the subject are somewhat confused," said Laura, "and hardly give me credit for having good taste. I admire beautiful well-groomed horses as much as any one, but the poor tired working ones appeal to me in a different way. And yet," she continued earnestly, "I often think that in many instances the beautiful high-strung creatures are as deserving of consideration as those that are hard worked."

"You are quite right, Miss Burton," returned the



Major. "Any horse or any animal at the mercy of a cruel person, man or woman, rich or poor, is to be pitied. And too many of our thorough-breds are owned by cruel people, else tight check reins and docked tails would not be in such abundant evidence."

"Do you disapprove of check reins?" asked Helen.

"Of tight ones, yes; most decidedly. They are not only cruel, but senseless. A horse with his head forced back loses a good part of his power, and to drive a horse up hill tightly checked is an abominable practice and is indulged in only by fools or by people ignorant of how horses should be treated. Pardon my strong language," said the old warrior, "but this is a subject on which I get enthusiastic. It acts on me like the roar of cannon away back in the sixties. Never will I forget the grand and noble horses of those dark days. There were heroes among them as well as among the men, and many a daring deed was made possible and done with the assistance of a horse that was tried and true. And yet, in the great crime called war, the wants of the wounded horses are the last to be attended to. There is no hospital for them, poor fellows. When they fall on the battle-field their days are over, either by the bullet or by the tortures of starvation and thirst. Among a humane and civilized people the horse should be a sacred animal, protected against all cruelties by most severe laws, and monuments should be erected, as in Japan, to

commemorate their noble deeds. No wonder I appreciate and am fond of horses. No wonder that when I see a man driving with a tight check I feel like checking his own head back in the same manner and running him up hill and down, to see how long he would stand it. Half the men who drive know no more about handling a horse than a steam engine. They drive as rapidly down hill as on a level, which is very injurious to a horse. He is not only liable to stumble and break a leg, but to become weak in the knees. Horses should not be driven rapidly either up hill or down, and if a little more consideration were shown them they would last much longer than they do."

"What Major Upton says is quite correct," said Mr. Cornell. "I have a good horse, perfect in every respect, and far better than many horses ten years old, and he is twenty-five. My father raised him from a colt, and he has never been allowed to trot up hill or down. He has had kind treatment, of course, all his life, and is good for a number of years yet. Many people abuse horses through ignorance, others because they are abusive by nature."

"People who purposely abuse animals, horses or even swine, are cowards!" said the Major emphatically. "Cowards because they take a mean advantage of animals simply because they are in their power. Those people may be rich, may live in great style, but there is something lacking in their make-up. There are many sports indulged

in," continued the Major, "which result in a great deal of cruelty—pigeon and duck shooting, for instance. Many of the birds shot at are merely wounded, perhaps a leg or a wing broken, and in that condition they flutter away and finally die of starvation. And yet such sports are too often indulged in by those who consider themselves cultured and refined. It is a pity that among rich and educated men there should be so much cruelty. The flutter of the wounded pigeon, the sufferings of the mutilated horse, the sacrifice of song-birds to bedeck a bonnet, the barbaric taste that calls for baby Persian lamb, are enough to show that a propaganda of humane education among the rich is quite as necessary as among the poor. A troop of red-coated hunters chase a terrified tame fox behind a pack of hounds and boast of being *in at the death*, while a band of ragged urchins would be at once arrested if found chasing a stray cat in similar manner. But the rich have their lawyers, and I am sorry to say their newspapers, to defend them, and make it almost impossible for the humane societies to secure evidence to convict them."

"I know a woman," said Mr. Cornell, "who had her horses put through the torture of being docked, absolutely indifferent to their sufferings, and yet I once heard her scream because the blood came from the merest scratch on her finger made by a cambric needle."

"I have no respect for such a person, be it man or woman," said the brusque old Major. "What

cared she for the pain inflicted on her horses, or their future discomfort in fly-time, providing they carried her about and contributed to her pleasure."

"That woman is like a person I know of," chimed in Lillian, involuntarily glancing towards Helen, "who likes to see horses with their heads held high up, but she makes a great fuss if her dress collar makes her hold her own head too high."

Miss Helen felt very uncomfortable just then, as the shrewd old Major detected. Laura detected it too, and, apparently unheeding Lillian's remark, said quickly :

"I know of a man who has recently had the ears and tails of his dogs cut, and yet he claims to be kind-hearted, and to be fond of those same dogs."

"His acts prove that he is neither one nor the other," responded the Major. "He is only fond of himself, and of gratifying his caprices at the expense of his dogs."

"Major Upton," said Laura, "what do you think of people who, when closing their houses for the season to go out of town, turn their cats into the street to live from ash-barrels or else starve?"

"I think such people are inhuman," was the reply. "Cats as a rule are very domestic animals and fond of home; and to be sent adrift in that manner is the height of cruelty. If the owners cannot provide for them during their absence they should have them mercifully destroyed."

“Some people would not care to move a cat,” said Helen, “because of the old superstition about it being bad luck.”

“And so they prefer to leave their bad luck to the cat,” said Mr. Cornell, “which perhaps is shut in the vacated house to die of starvation and thirst. Well, if those people expect good luck to follow such an act, their superstition and ignorance supersede their sense, and they expect what they don’t deserve.”

“What would you think of a man, Major Upton,” asked Lillian, “who shot a lot of pretty song-birds just for fun?”

“I wouldn’t think much of him,” returned the Major, “either as a man or a law-abiding citizen. It’s illegal to shoot song-birds; besides, the mere wantonness of the act is despicable.”

Edmund felt slightly embarrassed because of Major Upton’s unwitting opinion of him, but made no comment.

“There’s a woman on Long Island who shoots bull-frogs just for fun,” continued Lillian. “What do you think of her, Major Upton?”

“She must be a French ‘frog-eater,’” he returned, “and eager for something to kill.”

Lillian laughed gleefully, as though she had achieved a triumph, and exclaimed: “That ‘frog-eater’ is a great friend of aunt Helen’s, but I’ll not tell her name.”

“I see they are indulging in a new, or rather an

old-time sport out in Chicago," remarked Edmund, entering the conversation.

"What is it?" asked Mrs. Burton.

"Chasing a greased pig," he replied. "At the dedication of the new home of the 'Saddle and Cycle Club' a greased pig was the star attraction in the way of amusement."

Mrs. Burton's lip curled contemptuously. "An edifying amusement indeed," was her ironical remark.

"And one that a lot of lunatics might enjoy," added the Major. "The pigs of to-day," he continued, "must be slightly different from those of Bible times. Those of Biblical lore waited until the devils took possession of them before running into the sea; this pig ran into Lake Michigan to escape the supposed devils who were after him. Well, there are different grades of civilization in civilized communities, and the club that would tolerate such a thing must belong to a rather mediocre grade."

"I quite agree with you, Major Upton," said Mrs. Burton. "It seems quite impossible for people of culture to be amused by witnessing such a revolting spectacle."

"Greasing a pig isn't as bad as cutting kittens and rabbits all to pieces to see how they're made inside," said Lillian. "I cut one of my dolls in two once to see what it was made of, but it couldn't feel it. But I wouldn't cut up anything alive."

"I should hope not," responded the Major.

"Some folks do though," persisted Lillian. "Miss

Wilson said so. She said some school teachers cut kittens all to pieces before the scholars and made the scholars help to desiccate them—whatever that is, and—”

“Dissect them, you mean,” interrupted Laura.

“Yes, that’s it; and Miss Wilson called it vivi—vivi—vivi—something.”

“Vivisection,” suggested the Major.

“Yes, vivisection; that’s it, but the teachers who did it called it ‘science.’”

“Science be—be blessed!” exclaimed the Major, “when it delves in a humane direction; when it does more good than evil, and when it causes more pleasure than pain. As for the teachers who subject their pupils to such demoralizing influences, words are inadequate to express my contempt. Heaven help the man who ever makes one of them his wife. The kind of women who teach science with a scalpel are morbid and unwomanly, and as cold and as bloodless as turnips. I’d as lief marry a hyena as a woman of that stamp.”

“I take a paper called ‘Our Dumb Animals,’” said Laura, “published in Boston, and I see by it that the Massachusetts S.P.C.A. has succeeded in abolishing vivisection from the schools of the State.”

“I am delighted at their success,” rejoined the Major fervently. “I think I’ll write them a letter expressing my sympathy, and enclose a check to help the good cause along. All such movements require money—the more the better.”

The recent yacht races were then discussed, a subject on which Edmund grew enthusiastic, and endeavored to make known his superior knowledge. Then the conversation drifted, and remained general the rest of the evening.





## CHAPTER VII.



DIRECTLY the guests were gone Helen vented her indignation on her offending niece. "Lillian Chester," she exclaimed, "you are no more fit to appear in a drawing-room than an uncivilized Hot-tentot. Your conduct to-night was perfectly dreadful; you acted shamefully."

"'Shamefully' is an adverb," returned Lillian, "and I'm not an adverb, so I couldn't have acted like one. I'm a noun. Miss Wilson said so."

"You're an exceedingly *improper* noun, then; in fact, you were a very common noun to-night, judging from your conduct."

"I'm not a common noun, aunt Helen, and if you say so it's because you don't know good grammar. That sofa pillow is a common noun, and this chair; and I'm not a pillow nor a chair, though you do try to sit on me sometimes. Oh, I know what I am," she added suddenly, "I'm a verb, because I'm always in action."

"Mother," said Helen, "it's perfectly absurd for a child of nine years to be studying grammar and talking about verbs and nouns and adverbs when she doesn't know the first rules of polite deportment. What is Miss Wilson thinking about to put

her into grammar? If I were you I would engage a more competent governess at once."

"Miss Wilson never put me into a grammar," said Lillian, indignantly. "I never saw a grammar. She only told me what a noun was, and a verb, and all the rest."

"Well," rejoined Helen, "she is only wasting time. She might better be teaching you that pert children of your age should be seen and not heard."

Then Bartlett appeared on the scene in response to Mrs. Burton's imperious ring, and bore her charge away.

"Now mother," said Helen, "the next time we have company, if Lillian is permitted to leave the nursery I shall not come into the drawing-room at all. She is the most disagreeable child I ever saw, and both you and Laura encourage her in her pert ways."

"I do nothing of the kind," replied Mrs. Burton, somewhat sternly, "nor does Laura; and I must say, Laura exercises far better judgment in managing her than you do. You become offended with her childish doings the same as if you were her own age, while Laura assumes a superior dignity, and wins her love and respect, instead of antagonizing her. Let me assure you, Helen, that your treatment of Lillian is very displeasing to me, and your constant criticism of my actions as well."

Helen rose, said "good night," and left the room. She was indignant that in one single instance Laura had found favor in her mother's sight where she had not.

The evening after Mr. Cornell and Major Upton dined at "Wildwood" the two were sitting out on the piazza enjoying a quiet smoke, when the Major referred to the Burtons.

"You're fortunate, Harold," he said, "in having become acquainted with your neighbors, inasmuch as they seem so sociably inclined. I was not quite favorably impressed with Mrs. Burton; she appeared to be somewhat superficial. But Miss Burton is a jewel; there's character for you—noble character. She's a broad-minded, whole-souled girl—fine looking too."

"And Miss Helen—what did you think of her?" asked Mr. Cornell.

"Well, to tell the truth," returned the Major, "I haven't wasted very much thought on her. She's very ordinary compared with her sister; her mind is as narrow as her sister's is broad. With her—if I am any judge of human nature—it's self, always self; first, last and all the time. I was mightily pleased with the shot the little one gave her. Guess there's no love lost between those two, although the child idolizes the other one. As for young Burton, he's a sort of nonentity. Prides himself on being a rich man's—or rather, a rich woman's only son, and quite a swell. He's been humored by an indulgent mother until his manhood is dwarfed. Had he been a poor man's son, and been compelled to be self-reliant and hustle for a living, he might have amounted to something; he may yet. He's young enough to improve, but I must say his chances are

small if he doesn't break away from his mother's superficial influences. Nevertheless, as a whole, they're a pleasant family to know."

"Evidently Mrs. Burton's ideas of her son do not coincide with yours," remarked Mr. Cornell.

"Indeed not. She's as blind as a bat to his faults. While you were turning the music for Miss Helen I had quite a chat with her. She's quite a clever woman, rather well-informed, but decidedly conservative and prejudiced. She dotes on that son of hers, thinks he's the pink of perfection; but if any one were to point out a few of his faults and give her some hard horse-sense suggestions concerning him, do you think she would receive them kindly? No indeed; she would be as mad as a March hare."

"You could hardly blame her," replied Mr. Cornell, "for resenting it as a personal affront, particularly if she had not asked her adviser's opinion."

"That is very probable," continued the Major. "People are so suspicious of the motives of their critics that they lose sight of the truths those critics sometimes discover. They would rather be flattered than found fault with, and the more conservative and narrow-minded the individual the more objectionable becomes the criticism. They are offended at once, and their best friend is often looked upon as an enemy. Kindly intentions count for nothing with such people, and I must say women are more inconsistent than men."

"You speak as a man of experience, Major."

“Well, I have had some, and one, particularly, which I think would surprise you. But I’m not going to bore you with it. I’ll simply admit this much. Only for the inconsistency of woman, I would not be sitting here to-night an old bachelor.”

“It would not bore me, I assure you. I’d like to hear it immensely.”

“Possibly ; but it’s a long story and best untold, so we’ll leave it a sealed chapter. But talking about woman’s inconsistency, let me give you an illustration. There’s Mrs. Blank of Stuyvesant Square, for instance. She is really a kind-hearted woman whose motives are excellent ; but she is inconsistent—dreadfully so. We had a conversation one evening, during which cruelty to animals was discussed. She is bitterly opposed to docking horses, and gave expression to her opinions on the subject in rather forcible terms. And yet, in less than a week after that conversation I saw her whirling past one morning in a hired cab drawn by a dock-tailed horse. The next time I saw her I called her to account for patronizing that cabman, but she hardly understood my motive until I explained that she was indirectly encouraging the very practice which she so strongly condemned. I tried to impress her with the idea that no coachman who drove a dock-tailed horse or used a tight check, or who in any way seemed neglectful of his horse, should be patronized. And will you believe it, she actually laughed at me ; intimated that I was an extremist, and said that if she had refused the cab

on those grounds the cabman would have thought her a crank."

"And what was your defense, Major?"

"I said to her: Mrs. Blank, what need you care for the cabman's opinion? Why did you not tell him plainly that you would not ride behind a horse with a docked tail. Then encourage your friends to follow your example. By the time half a dozen had refused his cab for the same reason, he would begin to realize that docked tails were losing prestige. By degrees his fellow cabmen would fare the same way, and in time come to his way of thinking. They would refuse to buy docked animals, the demand for them would be less and less, until eventually there would be no market for them at all. And when the rich could no longer dispose of their worn out docked horses in order to replenish their stables with younger ones, the diabolical practice would soon cease."

"What did Mrs. Blank say to all that?"

"Why, she coincided with me fully. Said she had never thought of it from that standpoint before, and would be only too glad to follow my suggestions. All of which proves that she is sensible, and can be reasoned with, and that her apparent inconsistency is more a lack of observation and thought than otherwise. Some women would have laughed at my ideas and ignored them altogether, if in any way they would have been inconvenienced in applying them. Some people are so utterly selfish and superficial, and so indifferent to the inhuman treat-

ment of animals, that it is impossible to reason with them or to get them interested."

"I think you have proved that Mrs. Blank is an exception to your list of 'inconsistent' lady acquaintances," observed Mr. Cornell. "Many would have held to their first opinions, whereas she changed on giving the subject a moment's thought."

"I think I can name one woman who is neither inconsistent nor thoughtless," returned the Major, "and that is Miss Burton. I'm immensely interested in that girl, Harold; she pleases me wonderfully. Her character is self-reliant and forceful, tempered with kindness and good sense. What have you to say on the subject?"

"Nothing in opposition, I assure you," returned Mr. Cornell, smiling at the Major's earnestness.

"In opposition, I should say not," grunted the Major. "But what about something in her favor? I'll tell you what it is, Harold, if you ever intend to marry it's time you were thinking about it, and I don't believe you'd find a more desirable girl if you looked the world over than Laura Burton. What do you say?"

"I quite agree with you, Major, that Miss Burton is very charming."

"Not only charming but gifted," retorted the Major. "In fact, she's my ideal of a woman. Seriously, Harold, have you no intention of ever marrying?"

"Really, Major," returned Mr. Cornell evasively,

“I never knew you to be so enthusiastic about any woman before. Seems to me you are—”

—“I’ll tell you what it is, my boy,” interposed the Major impatiently, because of Mr. Cornell’s indifference, “if I were your age instead of being old enough to be your father, I would warn you to look out for yourself and lose no time, for I’d enter the race, and I’d enter to win—if I could.”





## CHAPTER VIII.



IN June the Belmonts came to "Wildwood" for a week prior to embarking for Europe. The evening after their arrival Mr. Cornell and Major Upton called informally, unaware of guests being present. The next morning Mrs. Burton received a note from Mr. Cornell inviting herself and daughters, together with their guests, to take a sail on his steam yacht "Figaro" the next afternoon directly after luncheon. In a postscript he added: "I sincerely hope, dear Mrs. Burton, that Miss Lillian may be one of the party. I am sure we would enjoy her company and I am sure she would enjoy the sail. H. L. C."

Mrs. Burton accepted the invitation, then sent the note to Laura, Helen being at the time invisible, and in that manner it fell into Lillian's hands. The postscript especially delighted her.

"O, I do think Mr. Cornell is lovely!" she exclaimed. "Don't you, auntie Laura?"

"It is very good of him to remember you, I am sure," was the reply.

"Auntie, what does 'H. L. C.' stand for?" she asked, still surveying the note.

"They are Mr. Cornell's initials. Look at the main part of the note and read the signature."

"It is 'Harold Livingston Cornell,' " said Lillian. "Auntie," she proceeded after a moment's meditation, "I don't think 'H. L.' are nice initials at all."

"Why not; what is wrong with them?"

"Well," she replied, demurely, "if you put an 'e' after the 'H' and then add another 'l' it would spell the name of the bad place, where Mangin said I'd go if I chloroformed another lobster."

"Why, Lillian, you should not talk like that. It's not nice."

Just then Helen knocked for admittance and asked to see Mr. Cornell's note, which fact saved Laura from further discussion.

The yachting party next day had an enjoyable time, and that night, before retiring to her room, Estelle Belmont said to Helen:

"'Wildwood' is simply charming. I am really sorry we are going abroad, otherwise I would beg to remain here all summer. And," she added, half laughing, half earnest, "I think Mr. Cornell is simply elegant."

"And so do I," thought Helen, but her thoughts remained unspoken.

When the Belmonts left, Edmund and Helen accompanied them into town, Edmund for the purpose of attending a yacht race that afternoon down the bay, and Helen to spend the day with Mrs. Martelle, her mother's sister.

During the afternoon Mr. Cornell called to bring Mrs. Burton a book which was out of print, and which she had expressed a wish to read. She

thanked him for his thoughtfulness and insisted upon his remaining to dinner. "My daughter Laura and I are quite alone to-day," she explained, "and would find dinner exceedingly dull."

Mr. Cornell readily accepted her invitation. "I am really glad of the opportunity," he said, "for I too am alone to-day. Major Upton is in Philadelphia and will not return until to-morrow."

So he remained, and after dinner they went out upon the broad piazza to enjoy the warm summer evening. Mrs. Burton seated herself in a hammock, Lillian lounged on a rug thrown upon the grass, while Mr. Cornell and Laura occupied easy chairs. The evening was sultry, and as the twilight deepened, Mrs. Burton's fan ceased its motion and she was soon dozing. Lillian fell asleep on the grass, leaving Mr. Cornell and Laura practically alone. The moon rose full and clear; the air was heavily perfumed with flowers; the situation was entrancing, and by tacit consent they conversed in lower tones so as not to disturb the sleepers.

At last a silvery toned clock from within chimed nine. Mrs. Burton moved in the hammock, and again the fan slowly fluttered.

"Dreadfully oppressive to-night," she remarked. "Really I feel too enervated to converse intelligently, so please excuse me, Mr. Cornell. My daughter is not affected by atmospheric influences as I am, and no doubt you will find her far more entertaining."

Mr. Cornell made some fitting reply, and soon Mrs. Burton was quietly dozing again.

“Poor mother,” said Laura, “she so dislikes to admit even to herself that she is not as young as she once was, or that she finds it difficult to keep awake. It would mortify her very much if she thought you suspected she was asleep.”

When the train on which Edmund and Helen were to arrive whistled for the station, Mr. Cornell rose to take leave. Evidently he had passed a most delightful evening and did not care to have the remembrance disturbed by the advent of a less congenial element.

Mrs. Burton, awakened by the incoming train, rose up and endeavored to appear wide awake as she bade him good-night.

After that Mr. Cornell and Laura met often, but never to be alone. If at “Wildwood,” other members of the family were present; if out on a ramble Laura was either accompanied by a guest or Miss Lillian. But the remembrance of that moonlight night she never forgot. When he took leave she felt that he was interested in her, while in her inmost heart she knew that she loved him. And so the summer passed pleasantly by and early autumn came.

One bright morning Laura and Lillian took a long ramble in a different direction from any they had ever taken before. When some two miles from “Wildwood” they suddenly found themselves in a marshy piece of ground.

“We had better venture no further in this direction,” said Laura, “but go direct to the public highway and return home by that.”

On reaching the highway they had proceeded only a short distance when a horseman came galloping up behind them.

"O auntie, it's Mr. Cornell!" exclaimed Lillian, who had taken advantage of the license accorded to children to turn and watch the advancing rider. On overtaking them Mr. Cornell dismounted, chatted a moment, then asked the privilege of walking home with them.

"This is indeed a surprise," he said. "I thought you never came in this direction."

"We never have before," replied Lillian, "but we were caught in a swamp, and had to get out quickly or get wet. See," she added, displaying her little stained shoe. "But now since you've come," she continued spritely, "I'm glad we did get in the swamp, and I guess auntie is glad too, for if we hadn't we wouldn't have seen you."

Laura was silent.

"Aren't you glad, auntie Laura?" the child persisted.

"Why certainly," was the frank reply. "Otherwise you would have been denied a great pleasure."

Lillian laughed and bounded away to gather a bunch of ferns growing by the wayside.

"You speak entirely from Lillian's standpoint, Miss Burton," said Mr. Cornell with a quick, meaning look.

The look and real significance of his words apparently passed unheeded, for in a formally polite manner Laura replied: "Not entirely, Mr. Cornell,

for I assure you I am pleased that you overtook us. The road is a rather lonely one and your coming was quite opportune."

A shade of disappointment passed over his face. Her words uttered in that polite but indifferent tone conveyed to him nothing more than ordinary courtesy, and he would have been glad to know that she was as pleased to see him as he was to see her.

Soon Lillian returned with the bunch of ferns, but for once Mr. Cornell found his little favorite decidedly *de trop* and heartily wished her out of the way. He sent her off on several expeditions, but like the proverbial bad penny she always returned — too soon.

"Do you see that butterfly?" he asked at last. "Run, Lillian, and see which can go the faster, you or the butterfly."

"It's wicked to chase butterflies," returned Lillian, "and auntie Laura won't allow me to."

"She will for this once," he said with assurance, and without even a glance toward Laura. "Besides," he added, "you need not catch it; only run a race, you know, and if you beat the butterfly I'll give you a dollar."

Not suspecting Mr. Cornell's motive, Lillian promptly replied:

"Grandma Burton gives me all the dollars I need, and I'm sure I'd be beaten if I tried the race, so I guess I won't try it." A moment later she added quickly: "I guess I will try after all, and if

"I win the dollar I'll give it to auntie Laura, because she hasn't any money any more; grandma gives it all to uncle Edmund and aunt Helen."

Before Laura could utter one word of reproof the child shook the butterfly from the bush on which it rested and bounded off in swift pursuit. Then in sudden desperation Laura explained that her manner of spending her allowance had so displeased her mother that it had long since been withheld.

"I cannot imagine," said Mr. Cornell, "that you spent it foolishly or improvidently."

"Nor did I. It was mostly used in instances which appealed to my sympathies, and according to my best judgment and discretion."

Then Laura changed the subject, not caring to further discuss either the merits or demerits of the case from her own, or from her mother's side of the question.

Their conversation was mostly on general subjects, and friendly — nothing more. And yet something in his tone, his look, told her that he loved her, and that he would tell her so then and there were it not for Lillian's uncomfortably near presence and liability to suddenly return. And sure enough she did return almost the next moment, panting and out of breath, but joyous nevertheless.

"I beat!" she cried. "The butterfly fluttered and fluttered, and I got to that tree way out there first. That was fair, wasn't it?"

"O yes, quite fair," and taking a dollar from his pocket Mr. Cornell placed it in her hand.

With a proud air she promptly handed it over to Laura.

"It's the first money I ever earned all by myself," she said, "and it will buy supper for lots of little boys and girls, and for some hungry animals too; won't it, auntie?"

Laura hesitated about taking Lillian's hard-earned money.

"Take it, Miss Burton," said Mr. Cornell in an aside. "It will encourage the child to be generous and unselfish. Besides, she earned it only for the pleasure of giving it to you."

Finding no other pretext on which to send Lillian away they all walked on together.

"Mr. Cornell, you have been gathering autumn leaves," Lillian suddenly exclaimed. "I see them in your pocket."

"Only a few," he returned, withdrawing a handful from the breast-pocket of his riding-jacket and fastening several variegated ones in her broad-brimmed hat. Then from the bunch he took three smaller ones, more delicately tinted than the others and handed them to Laura.

"These are really the rarest specimens I ever saw in autumn leaves," he said.

She accepted them and proceeded to adorn the lapel of her walking coat.

"Now Miss Lillian," he said, "I hope you admire those leaves sufficiently to keep them in remembrance of this morning's walk."

He did not even glance toward Laura, but she



felt intuitively that his words were intended for her, and a faint color stole to her cheeks, which he quickly detected, and once more he wished Lillian were far away.

On reaching "Wildwood," Lillian, ever ready with her invitations, begged Mr. Cornell to go in and remain to luncheon.

"What about Roman?" he asked. "He wants his luncheon, too, and he prefers his own stable to any other, so I think I must decline."

"Next time we take a walk, if you mean to catch up with us," she said demurely, "please leave Roman at home, for if you are going to walk all the way there's no use bothering to lead him about."

On entering the house Laura went directly to her own apartments and tenderly placed the three leaves in a volume of poems. All day long her thoughts were with Mr. Cornell. She remembered his every look, his every word. "I am sure he loves me," she thought, "and some day he will tell me so."

The next day Mr. Cornell went away on a yachting cruise. Then came several days of rain, keeping every one confined within doors. The rain was succeeded by a cold wave. Mrs. Burton hugged the fire and shivered, then complained of a touch of sciatica, and finally made sudden preparations to return to town. To Laura this was a blow. She could scarcely realize that the most delightful summer of her life had so suddenly ended. No more rambles over the fields, no more yachting excursions, no more evenings on the moonlit piazza. And

worse than all, to go without seeing Mr. Cornell for one word of farewell. Soon, however, she found consolation in the thought that he too would spend the winter in town, and that he would call upon them directly he came. Then another summer would come, and she must live in hope and anticipation until it did.

Mrs. Burton had never expressed disapproval of Mr. Cornell, but rather encouraged his frequent visits to "Wildwood." Had he shown a preference for either daughter she would straightway have drawn the line; but he could not wed both, and as his visits appeared merely friendly, and no more to one than the other, she considered there was nothing to fear from him and blindly permitted matters to drift along.

Soon after returning to her town house Mrs. Burton prepared to give a series of entertainments during the approaching season. Elaborate toilettes for herself and daughters were ordered from abroad. In matters of dress Mrs. Burton showed no partiality, and Laura's wardrobe was as lavishly supplied as her sister's. Nevertheless Laura was dissatisfied. Going about arrayed like a fashion-plate and carrying an almost empty purse was rather humiliating, and in the city her need of money became so frequent as to render her desperate.

"I cannot endure it!" she exclaimed to herself. "This penniless condition is intolerable. If mother will not give me any money I must earn it for myself"

That night she was nervous and wakeful. Different schemes for earning money were floating through her brain. At last she decided on one to adopt, and after considering it from all points of view her mind was relieved and she fell asleep.

One morning a few days later she rang the bell of an aristocratic residence on Madison Avenue, and sent in her card to Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse. She was shown into the reception room, and a moment later her hostess was greeting her, it being against that lady's principles to keep her guests long waiting.

"My dear Laura, so glad to see you," she exclaimed somewhat effusively. "You are alone too; really this is an unexpected pleasure."

"And I came quite secretly. Neither mother nor Helen knew of my coming."

"Really! Now my dear," continued Mrs. Vernoyse persuasively, "be a real good girl and oblige me by sending your carriage home and remaining to luncheon with me. I'll send you home in my own carriage in time for dinner."

"I have no carriage to send home," returned Laura; "nor even a cab to dismiss. I walked because I couldn't afford to hire one."

Mrs. Vernoyse smiled incredulously.

"I am in earnest," said Laura, "and if you will show me to your own apartments where we can talk without interruption I will gladly accept your invitation to luncheon, for I have a matter of importance to discuss with you."

When alone in Mrs. Vernoyse's boudoir, Laura

was assured that any confidence she wished to impart would be considered sacred and confidential, and without hesitation she proceeded to make her position clear. Mrs. Vernoyse became very indignant at what she considered the humiliation to which her favorite was subjected.

"The idea!" she exclaimed, "of your being treated as though you were a child with no mind of your own, or rather no judgment or discretion."

"I can't complain for myself personally," was Laura's quick response. "My mother is very generous in supplying my own requirements, but I need money for others, who are destitute and unhappy, and for the relief of unfortunate animals."

"And is Helen treated the same as you?"

"O no. She receives her allowance regularly each quarter the same as I did until forced to renounce my little charities."

"Is Helen under any restrictions in the spending of her allowance?"

"None whatever; she uses it to suit her own pleasure."

"Indeed. And you are not accorded the same privilege? Well, to my mind it's a clear case of partiality."

"I don't think my mother intends to be partial, Mrs. Vernoyse; but the money she allows Helen is used in a way that pleases her."

"Yes, and in a way which pleases Miss Helen at the same time, no doubt. Well, my dear child, what

is to be the outcome of all this? In other words, what do you propose to do?"

"I propose going into business and earning money for myself."

"Humph! And in what manner, pray? Are you going to learn typewriting and go into some dingy office for six or eight dollars a week?"

"O no; not quite as bad as that."

"Nursery governess then, as most girls in novels do who have met with reverses?"

"No, I am unlike the ordinary 'novel' girl in that respect."

"Going on the stage perhaps?"

"No indeed. I am not at all stage-struck."

"Will you be kind enough then to tell me what you *do* contemplate doing?" asked Mrs. Vernoyse laughing.

"I contemplate going into the millinery business," replied Laura calmly.

Mrs. Vernoyse raised her hands in dismay. "You don't mean it surely," she said.

"I do indeed. I never was more earnest in my life."

"Please explain yourself. In what capacity are you going into the business? Buyer, trimmer, saleswoman, or what?"

"Not either one. I intend to own the business myself and conduct it in a manner to insure success."

"Does your mother know?"

"No indeed. She would be horrified, and prob-

ably disinherit me entirely. Do not think that I wish to displease her, Mrs. Vernoyse; but she forces me to do something, and after due consideration and some investigation I have decided that the millinery business pays largely. Besides, I have another motive in view—as important as the financial one.”

“What is it?”

“*The abolishing of birds and birds' wings from hats and bonnets.*”

Mrs. Vernoyse settled back in her chair with a resigned air, prepared to hear all details.

“My plan,” said Laura, “is to secure show-rooms in some desirable location and fit them up handsomely, stock them with the choicest line of millinery to be procured at home or abroad and cater only to the wealthy classes.”

“And would you have the supervision?”

“O no, certainly not. It is quite out of my line. I am totally ignorant of the requirements for running such an establishment as I have in mind. I would leave all that to competent persons and only be what might be termed a ‘silent partner.’”

“How would you abolish the fashion of wearing birds?”

“I would endeavor to make them unfashionable by not permitting them in any way, shape, or manner among my stock. I would substitute for them the rarest and most valuable flowers and laces, plumes and tips.”

“And do you think you could change the fashion in that manner?”

“To a certain extent, yes. If I am fortunate enough to make the venture at all it shall be made on an elaborate and attractive scale. The place shall be a regular flower emporium and if possible the finest display in the city. The absence of anything in the line of wings or stuffed birds will be unique, and will make an impression. When a first class house adopts a certain line others are sure to follow, and in that manner fashions become established. Besides, my dear Mrs. Vernoyse, I shall hope for your patronage and influence and that of your friends. But no one aside from yourself must know of my connection with the affair. You are the only one in whom I shall confide.”

“I appreciate your confidence, my dear, and I assure you of my patronage and influence in advance. But how are you going to manage such a gigantic undertaking? Your plans as theories all seem very plausible, but do you realize that it will require barrels of money to do all you propose?”

“I realize that it will require a great deal,” replied Laura.

“‘A great deal’ does not express it. You will need a mint at your back until the business is sufficiently established to be self-supporting and able to pay a dividend. And if you haven’t a dollar how do you hope to proceed?”

“I hope,” returned Laura confidently, “to borrow the money from you; that is why I am here to-day.”

“Humph! borrow it from me!” repeated Mrs.

Vernoyse dryly. "Well, that's cool of you I must say; decidedly cool; decidedly frank, and not the least bit presuming. And pray what put it into your pretty brown head to come to me?"

"My intuitions, or better judgment; perhaps both."

"Our intuitions often lead us astray," muttered Mrs. Vernoyse.

"Not in this instance, I think," replied Laura with wonderful assurance.

"And why not?" Mrs. Vernoyse asked giving her a searching look.

"Well," returned Laura thoughtfully, "you are a very rich woman, a generous woman, a philanthropist; besides that, you have been a true friend to me all my life, and have often told me to let you know if in any way you could be of service, and I think you will not permit this pet scheme of mine to go untried for want of money."

Mrs. Vernoyse made no reply. She merely rose, took a rapid survey of herself in a mirror to see if her fluffy gray hair needed re-arranging, then rather curtly said: "Come, my dear, luncheon is served; I think we can better discuss this momentous scheme of yours on the strength of a good cup of oolong. Do you know," she continued briskly, as though to evade the matter under discussion, "in my opinion there's nothing in the drinking line to equal a cup of the best oolong. And I want it 'trimmed,' as they call it down in Connecticut. Do you know what that means?"



Laura admitted that she did not.

“Neither did I once. The first time I ever heard the expression was at a Connecticut farm-house when I was a girl. At their twelve o’clock dinner the hostess asked if I would take my tea ‘trimmed.’ Not having the remotest idea of what she meant I said ‘No,’ whereupon she handed me the tea pure and simple. I handed it back with the request that she add cream and sugar. She looked surprised and said she understood that I did not want it ‘trimmed.’ And to this day, my dear, down-east, ‘trimming’ a cup of tea means adding cream and sugar.”

Laura rose and followed Mrs. Vernoyse toward the luncheon room. As they were about to enter, the latter whispered encouragingly :

“Now, child, enjoy your tea, and make your mind easy, for those intuitions of yours were pretty correct after all, and you may count on me for any amount not exceeding a quarter of a million.”



## CHAPTER IX.



AURA was not at all surprised, nor had she been at all disappointed at Mrs. Vernoyse' apparent indifference. She well knew her to be as impulsive as she was generous, as generous as she was at times erratic. Nevertheless she was popular both in society and in private life. She was thoroughly good-hearted too, but oftentimes blunt even to brusqueness. She said and did things in public which only Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse could do or say with impunity. She sometimes made enemies; outspoken people usually do. But she only acted or spoke according to her convictions; and with those who knew her as she was and who understood and appreciated her real worth, she was far more esteemed and respected than if she had been less pronounced. There are people who dare not speak their minds for fear of giving offence, and who, in striving to win the approbation of all, win the approbation of none.

The luncheon was rather elaborate, as Mrs. Vernoyse' luncheons always were. Among other dishes was one of *pate de foie gras*. Laura refused it.

"Take some; it is unusually fine," urged her hostess.

"No, thank you; I refuse from principle," said Laura, smiling.

"From principle, fiddle-sticks," retorted Mrs. Vernoyse. "What in the name of common sense has principle to do with *pate de foie gras*?"

Laura briefly related the article she had recently read, and graphically described the acute suffering of the geese while their livers were being abnormally developed.

"Is that true? State your authority," demanded Mrs. Vernoyse.

Laura named the paper and mentioned the article as having been an editorial. No servants were present, and Mrs. Vernoyse rang rather peremptorily.

"Carter," she said as the butler responded, "remove this *pate de foie gras* from the table, and never place it before me again. Wait; tell Larkins never to order it; have him strike it from the list—it's condemned, boycotted as far as this house is concerned."

A few moments later the platter of rejected food was under lively discussion in the servant's dining-hall.

"*Ze pate de foie* no good!" exclaimed the French chef in alarm. "*Sacre bleu!*" And snatching the platter from the butler's hand he tested it with the assurance of an epicure. Then his excitement subsided and he pronounced it of the best quality.

"Hit's hall right then?" inquired Larkins. "Nothing whatsoever wrong with hit, eh? 'Er

ladyship takes whims sometimes, or perhaps," he added in a stage whisper, "she discovered that a fly 'ad crawled over hit."

"So much the more for ourselves," remarked Carter. "First quality food too."

"I don't want none of it, sure I don't," protested a chambermaid. "Somethin's wrong wid it when my lady t'rows it at de butler."

Some decided with the chef, others were of the opinion that something was wrong with the discarded dish.

After luncheon Laura's prospective enterprise was again under discussion.

"What shall be the first step?" asked Mrs. Vernoyse.

"I shall consult with some real estate broker and secure desirable quarters at once. The rest will be easy enough. Of course it will take time, but I hope to have everything arranged within a few weeks."

"Very well; go ahead as soon as you like. What money you may need will be forthcoming by ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

"I shall not require anything like the amount you have named," said Laura, "but whatever I do require will be gratefully received and returned to you as soon as practicable."

"Don't begin to talk about the returning before you've even gotten it," said Mrs. Vernoyse, bluntly, "and don't make the mistake of starting with insufficient capital. The assessors tell me that I am

worth a number of millions, and I would be just as happy with considerably less. In fact, I'd never know the difference except on paper. It wouldn't alter my mode of living one iota. I would live in the same house, have the same furniture, the same horses and carriages, the same number of servants. Besides, I am interested in your scheme and want to see it succeed. Not for your own sake alone, but because it would gratify me immeasurably to know that even indirectly I was instrumental in abolishing the slaughter of birds for ornamental purposes. So, my dear Laura, instead of being under obligations, you may consider that you are doing me a favor by enabling me to invest some of my superfluous gold in a manner which pleases me immensely. Furthermore, you may consider me your banker, and can draw on me whenever you like until the venture is on a paying basis."

From that hour Laura worked unceasingly, and six weeks from the day she projected her plan to Mrs. Vernoyse the new "Floral Millinery Emporium" was ready for a grand opening. Cards of invitation had been extensively circulated among the *élite*. Mrs. Norman Burton had received one and on the day named she and her daughters presented themselves with scores of others at the "Grand Opening."

Madame Dupont—a handsome, vivacious French woman, the ostensible head of the establishment, came forward clad in trailing robes and graciously received her guests. Madame in herself was a

drawing card. Her manner was enchanting, her costume a dream-like combination of French art. Moreover, she knew her part well, and possessed the originality and tact to play it successfully.

The floral display was one of the finest ever witnessed in the history of millinery. The ribbons, laces and ornaments were the finest of importations, while the magnificent plumes and tips artistically arranged were quite the centre of attraction. Suddenly it was observed that not a bird or wing was visible in the otherwise faultless combinations exhibited. Then madame smilingly explained that they were losing favor; they were too suggestive of Indian adornments and savage-like relics to be permissible among her most perfect display, and that the ornaments exhibited were in far better taste than stuffed birds. Madame was very magnetic; her tone though low was forceful and convincing. Mrs. Clarence Montague was a ready convert.

"I have always contended that it was not in good taste to wear birds," she cried triumphantly to several of her friends standing near, "and I am really glad the fashion is to become obsolete, the sooner the better."

"And so am I," said Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse. "It will stop the slaughter of myriads of song-birds which heretofore have been sacrificed to woman's vanity."

"When I was a girl," added Mrs. William Olney Marvin, "Mr. Bryan, my foster father, objected to the custom from the fact that it caused thousands

of birds to be destroyed every year, and in sight and hearing of their young that were left in their nests to die; consequently I have never worn either birds or wings."

"Well," exclaimed Mrs. Montague, "I move that we denounce the custom as semi-barbaric, and let it die a natural death—no more birds for me!" And Mrs. Clarence Montague felt quite elated in the thought of having originated a brilliant idea.

"I have worn birds and wings all my life," admitted Miss Madeline Bronson to Mrs. Montague, "but I did it unwittingly. Never for one moment have I realized until now the cruel industry I was encouraging, and I am glad that my attention has been called to it."

"The ball has been set rolling," Mrs. Vernoyse managed to say in an aside to Laura, "and I shall give it a gentle push now and then to keep it moving."

"People are not altogether heartless," returned Laura. "They are thoughtless, and when once aroused to the fact they endeavor to atone."

Madame Dupont was quite delighted that one of her most extensive orders that day was from Mrs. Norman Burton. Mrs. Vernoyse also left a large order. Then they flew in thick and fast and the "Opening" was a grand success.

During the drive home Mrs. Burton commented favorably upon this new epoch in millinery.

"I quite approve of it," she said. "Madame Dupont's scheme is really a laudable one and she

can rely on my patronage and all that I can influence."

"What scheme do you refer to?" asked Helen.

"Why, it is rumored," replied Mrs. Burton, "that Madame is a very rich woman. A Baltimore society woman in fact, and an active member of the Woman's Branch of the Humane Society there. Being a philanthropist she has come to New York *incognito* and opened the Emporium for the express purpose of making the wearing of birds unfashionable."

"I wonder if that story be true?" asked Helen.

"I don't doubt it," replied Mrs. Burton. "She is certainly no ordinary tradeswoman. She is decidedly cultured and high-bred both in looks and manner."

"Who told you about her?" asked Laura.

"No one told me, but I overheard Gertrude Wellington mention the fact to Beatrice Raymond. In any event Madame Dupont has opened under brilliant auspices; other establishments of less importance will be sure to follow her innovation and ultimately her aim will be accomplished."

Laura was delighted to hear her mother's opinion so frankly expressed; but in her heart she knew—strange and unnatural as it may seem—that had her mother suspected that she was the sole promoter of it all no word of commendation would have been uttered. She was also amused at the little romance surrounding Madame Dupont, and secretly wondered at its origin. The truth of the matter was, Mrs.



Vernoyse, being a shrewd and worldly-wise woman, knew that a little mystery always adds spice, and a word dropped here and there exaggerated by frequent repetition soon had the desired effect. Madame speedily became a heroine; a woman who had renounced a brilliant social career to begin a crusade against the wanton destruction of birds. She became exceedingly popular among her patrons and the "Emporium's" prospective future looked bright indeed.



## CHAPTER X.



VERY Monday morning Laura visited "the Emporium" to look over the accounts and to note the increase in business. She went in a quiet way, however, and remained obscured in an alcove back of the reception room, which was screened by handsome portieres. No one connected with the establishment, aside from Madame Dupont, knew her name or where she lived. They only knew her to be financially interested in the business.

The holiday trade far exceeded her expectations, and Madame assured her that the establishment was drawing a large proportion of the fashionable custom of the city.

On the Monday morning after New Year's, Laura was sitting at her desk in the alcove, when a gentleman and lady accompanied by a little girl of some four years, entered the place. The lady looked at several bonnets, evidently undecided as to which she preferred. Finally the gentleman pointed to a combination of knots of black velvet and yellow tips which he seemed to admire.

"O Harold!" the lady exclaimed, "you know I look perfectly dreadful in yellow."

"I was not aware," he returned gallantly, "that you looked 'perfectly dreadful' in anything."

At the sound of his voice Laura started, while a deep color suffused her cheeks. She laid the account-book aside, arose from her chair and slightly parted the curtains so that she could see without being seen. The gentleman was facing her, she had not been mistaken — he was Mr. Cornell.

"Don't try to flatter me, Harold," returned the lady peevishly. "I'm annoyed beyond measure that I must be out bonnet-hunting at this unseasonable hour. I wish I'd never heard of that reception. I know it will be a terrible bore."

"Don't blame me, Pauline," he replied meekly. "I have nothing to do with the reception, and inasmuch as the invitation was delayed, if I felt as you do about it I certainly would not go."

"It's very easy to talk," she replied impatiently, "but one is often compelled to do things against one's inclination."

"Yes," he replied, "I admit that society is a rather tyrannical dictator."

The lady finally selected an exquisite Parisian conception of jet and pink tips. "I will take this one," she said to the attendant, "but I wish it slightly altered. Remove the pink tips and substitute some of pale lavender; and add a pretty bird of some kind which harmonizes in color. Or you may show me your assortment, I will select one myself."

"We have no birds in stock," returned the attendant politely.

“What, no birds?” she asked in amazement. Evidently this was her first visit to the Emporium. “I thought this establishment had but recently opened,” she continued; “if so it has run out of stock rather soon for a place of its pretensions.”

At that moment Madame Dupont approached and in her most engaging manner assured her customer that nothing in the line of birds was permissible, they being decidedly *passé*.

“I see them in other establishments,” was the somewhat haughty rejoinder.

Madame smiled benignly. “At present, yes,” she replied with wonderful complaisance, “but if you will observe later you may find my statement quite correct.” Then Madame bowed gracefully and turned away.

“If birds are becoming unfashionable, I certainly don’t want them,” the lady muttered. To the attendant she said: “Very well, I will take this, with the alterations already named, except the bird. And have it sent home before three o’clock this afternoon. You had better make a note of the order,” she said rather imperiously, “as it is important.”

The attendant produced an order-book, wrote what was required, then politely asked the address.

“I will write it myself,” the lady replied; “then I shall know there is no mistake.” Taking the book and pencil she wrote her name and address in a bold dashing hand.

“Be prompt,” she said, “and have this at my house by three o’clock sharp. Now, Harold, we

must be expeditious ; I have several other matters to attend to."

"Come, Gracie," said Mr. Cornell, addressing the child, who was a striking likeness of himself. The child clasped his hand lovingly, then Laura saw them enter the waiting carriage and drive away.

She turned from the portieres and again sat down. Her face was strangely pale. Mechanically she took up the weekly statement and for a long time stared vacantly at the column of entries before her. Suddenly an eager look came to her eyes, a flush to her cheeks. She rose hurriedly, and going to the reception-room withdrew the order-book from a drawer and with trembling hands turned to the last order written. Alas ! the address read, "Mrs. H. L. Cornell, No. — West 57th St."

"Mrs. H. L. Cornell," she repeated with white lips. How well she remembered when Lillian had commented unfavorably on those same initials. How indifferent she had been then, how they burned into her brain now. Returning to the alcove she leaned wearily upon the desk in front of her. An hour passed, then she sent for Madame Dupont.

"Madame," she said, "I am feeling quite ill this morning and have not properly looked over the accounts, but will try to attend to them to-morrow."

On reaching home luncheon was being served. As soon afterwards as she could find excuse to do so she sought her own apartments, closed the door and turned the key.

“Alone at last ! what a relief ! What an ordeal this day has been for me !”

She slowly walked the length of the room. Her hands were clasped, her face looked white and pained.

“How I have longed to see him !” she exclaimed. “How constantly he has been in my thoughts from the hour we parted that morning when he gave me the autumn leaves. Alas ! I have seen him, and how ? What a discovery ! What a humiliation ! I love him ; I love him dearly ; I never knew how dearly until to-day, and he has a wife—a wife and child.”

She suddenly burst into tears.

“It is cruel, cruel,” she sobbed. “Why did the Fates permit it. He is the only man I ever cared for, and I have given him my whole affection unasked—unsought. And I was so sure he loved me ; how blind I have been ; how self-deceived.” She sank into a chair utterly undone. “Yes,” she moaned, “I, Laura Burton, am in love with a married man, and that handsome blonde with the cold blue eyes, yellow hair and imperious tone, is his wife.”

Then feelings of indignation and resentment against the author of her misery possessed her.

“He had no right,” she exclaimed, “to palm himself off for an unmarried man. Why did he always manage to join me in my rambles ? Why call so often at ‘Wildwood’ ? Why lunch and dine with us so often and show by his manner that it

was I, whom he came to see? And that moonlight night on the piazza, where was his wife then? Why did he never refer to her? Did he purposely lead me to infer that he was unmarried? If so, why? Did he not know that eventually the fact would become known? It can be no secret; he goes about with her openly, consequently the world must know even if we his neighbors did not."

Laura meditated over the matter long and earnestly but could find no reasonable excuse for the course Mr. Cornell had taken. Every little incident in connection with their acquaintance only made her the more indignant. Her feelings were outraged, her pride humbled. She felt that she disliked and despised him as thoroughly as she had loved him. But she did not. Affection in a nature like Laura Burton's is not so easily uprooted.

After mentally denouncing him as being unjust and dishonorable until her fiercest indignation was exhausted, then, woman-like, she began to palliate his offence and take the blame to herself.

"No," she decided, "he is not so much at fault as I at first thought. He never uttered one word to which I can take exception; he was always courteous and friendly, nothing more. He sent Lillian on ahead that morning after butterflies because her ceaseless chatter and persistent questioning annoyed him. But after she had left us alone he said nothing which even suggested the slightest interest in me other than friendly. His look, which I construed as expressing affection for me, must have been pure imagination

on my part. He came to 'Wildwood' often I admit, but mother and Lillian urged him to do so and he complied, the same as any friendly neighbor would have done. Probably he only intended to show me the preference which, as Miss Burton, he considered my due, and I unwisely fell in love with him, but that was not his fault, and wishing him to be in love with me, I was foolish enough to believe that he was. As for never referring to his wife, perhaps he had good reasons for not doing so. There may have been some misunderstanding between them at the time, and he refrained from mentioning her, as it would require an explanation."

On this line of reasoning Laura absolved Mr. Cornell from all blame, and resolved to bury her summer's romance and no one be the wiser."

"No one but myself," she muttered, "I am wiser certainly. I have learned a bitter lesson; a lesson which will last me through life. And now I shall try to forget him, or at least school myself to remember him only as a pleasant summer acquaintance."

The next day Laura went to the Emporium to complete her unfinished task. The hour being later than usual she found the place filled with customers. Several among them recognized her. She chatted a moment, then proceeded to examine a new display of reception bonnets as critically as though she were there to select one. Soon Miss Persis Huntington, an intimate friend, entered the Emporium.

"Why Laura Burton!" she cried gladly; "I am



delighted to find you here. Do help me please to select a pretty theatre bonnet."

While making the selection Miss Huntington remarked that Madame Dupont's bonnets were the most exquisite of any she had ever seen either at home or abroad. "And Madame herself is lovely," she added. "It's a thousand pities she's only a milliner."

At that moment Madame Dupont entered the room and advanced to where they were standing. Miss Huntington made a selection, then asked Laura which one she was going to choose. Laura was undecided.

"Take this one," said Miss Huntington pointing to a combination of lace and rosebuds; "it just suits your style and it is perfectly bewitching."

"What is the price of this?" asked Laura of Madame Dupont.

"Only thirty-five dollars," replied Madame quietly, "and it is one of my very latest."

Laura demurred.

"O take it, do," urged Miss Huntington; "it's too sweet for anything."

"Very well," said Laura, turning to Madame; "you may send it to my address—you know it I believe."

"O yes—Miss Burton, is it not?"

Laura bowed and turned away. No use to think of the accounts that morning, so she and Persis Huntington left the place together. Laura disliked deception, and resolved never to be placed in the

same position again, and thereafter when she visited the Emporium it was at an earlier hour, and before the fashionable shoppers were out.

At her next visit Madame assured her that business was exceedingly prosperous and that they were banking money in large amounts. Laura laughingly referred to the incident of her last visit. "I admit that it looked rather like a business tactic," she said, "but it was purely accidental. I was as innocent of any complicity in the matter as was Miss Huntington."



## CHAPTER XI.



RS. Vernoyse insisted that Laura should take luncheon with her every Wednesday, at which time they would have an opportunity to discuss anything of interest.

“Of course,” she added, “it is understood that you will continue to attend my ‘At Homes’ on Thursdays, but our Wednesday luncheons shall be strictly private. I will be at home to no one else, so, my dear, you must never disappoint me.”

Laura readily complied with her request and never regretted having done so.

A week or so after her discovery concerning Mr. Cornell, on presenting herself in Mrs. Vernoyse’s boudoir, that lady scrutinized her critically over her eye-glasses, then rather brusquely asked what was the matter.

“Nothing, I assure you, I am quite well,” replied Laura.

“Nonsense, don’t try to deceive these old eyes of mine. They’re as keen as ever, and as far-seeing. Anything amiss at the Emporium?”

“Nothing whatever.”

“What is it then? Come,” she added more gently, “be frank with me. You look troubled. There is a

pathetic, a hopeless sort of expression in your eyes which I never saw before. What is the cause of it?"

"I am somewhat annoyed this morning, I admit," said Laura, "though not to the extent you imagine."

"Ah! I thought so. We are coming to it. Well, proceed."

"Several times of late I have been overtaken by inclement weather and have been compelled to hire a carriage to take me home, which fact has caused my mother to wonder. Yesterday she asked me outright from what source I was drawing money. I told her that you had made me a loan. She asked how and when I ever expected to repay you. I replied that if I ever could do so I would. But if I could not, that you would either cancel my obligation or give me a receipted bill."

"What did she say to that?"

"She said but little concerning the loan direct, but was very indignant and upbraided me severely for having told you that my allowance was withheld."

"She did? Indeed! I suppose she thinks it quite right and proper to treat you like a weak-minded child, but quite wrong and improper for you to betray her treatment. Well, your mother should not do that which would condemn her if disclosed."

Mrs. Vernoyse was silent for awhile, then rather startled Laura by saying: "The day after to-morrow I shall call upon your mother in your behalf, and have an understanding."

Laura protested, but Mrs. Vernoyse unheedingly continued: "My dear girl, you know that I have always been exceedingly fond of you from the time you wore pinafores—more fond of you than of any one else, and I am going to tell you why."

She suddenly paused, while tears dimmed her eyes. She was thinking of a time in the past, and the memory affected her.

"Many years ago," she proceeded gently, "I lost my only child—my little Laura, three years old. She was my idol, my all; and losing her nearly broke my heart. It seemed as if I could not have it so; as if I could not give her up. Only a few weeks after she died, and while my heart was an aching void, I saw you. You were about her own age, you bore her name, and you resembled her with your dark eyes and bonny brown hair. My heart went out to you at once. I longed to clasp you in my arms, hold you there forever, and make myself believe that you were my lost darling returned to me. In my grief and loneliness I begged your parents to let me have you, but they refused. They both sympathized with me in my sorrow, but your father said that parting with his little Laura would be like parting with life. But I often saw you, and as you grew older and your character formed I remained as fondly attached to you as ever. Now I am going to admit to you that at times I experience great heart difficulty. I know that I am liable to drop off any hour, although my physician says I may live for years to come. However, I am philosophical about

it and merely wish to prepare for the worst. Of course my money will fall to some one, and naturally I have a choice in the matter and my choice is yourself, and—”

“O Mrs. Vernoyse,” interposed Laura, “you cannot—”

“O yes I can!” interrupted that lady emphatically. “I can do exactly as I choose with my own, and I choose to make you my heir, the same as I would have done with my own little Laura had she lived.”

Laura was quite overcome, but Mrs. Vernoyse would not permit her to say one word on the subject.

“Never mind about expressing your thanks and gratitude,” she said. “I know you appreciate my intentions, and I, on the other hand appreciate the fact that after I am dead my money will not be squandered by frivolous-minded people, but will be used in a manner pleasing to me. Now Laura, tell me what is troubling you. I’m sure it’s something more than the mere fact of your mother knowing that I let you have money. It’s no love affair I hope.”

“No indeed!” was the decided answer. “I love no one, no man at least, and I am equally sure no man loves me.”

“Perhaps it’s just as well,” said Mrs. Vernoyse, “for if such were the case I imagine there would be war in the camp in earnest when the fact became known to your mother. It’s a queer whim of hers,

this determination to keep you all with her as long as she lives. It's well enough while you're young, but if she has her way she'll be surrounded by a couple of old maids and perhaps a crusty old bachelor one of these days."

"I hope she will never have occasion to regret her determination," said Laura.

"As for Edmund and Helen," continued Mrs. Vernoyse, "they can look after their own interests to the best of their ability; I am not particularly interested in them, but I intend to arrange things so that your future will be assured no matter what you may decide to do. The time may come when you will wish to leave the maternal nest and fly to a home of your own. Then your mother might be sufficiently disagreeable to disinherit you. But I feel confident that you will never make the error of falling in love with an unworthy man."

Laura winced. It seemed a cruel fatality that her first experience had been so grave an error.

"I was a girl myself once," Mrs. Vernoyse went on, "and my parents had rigid notions concerning me. They would have selfishly kept me in a glass case if they could until I was past all hope of being sought; and had they succeeded I probably would have been a disappointed and unhappy old woman to-day. But I wouldn't be kept in their glass case; I shivered it, so to speak, and wedded Archibald Vernoyse, and I've never regretted it although he left me a widow many years ago."

Two days later Mrs. Vernoyse called on Mrs.

Burton according to agreement with Laura. Mrs. Burton's brows slightly elevated when the servant handed in her card, and she made some caustic remark to the effect of herself being honored instead of Laura.

Evidently the call was of special importance, from the fact that it lengthened into an hour. Then Mrs. Burton sent for her daughters. Mrs. Vernoyse greeted Laura warmly, Helen with formal politeness.

"Mrs. Vernoyse has called principally in your interest to-day, Laura," said Mrs. Burton coldly, directly the girls were seated. "She evidently thinks I am severe in my treatment of you. On one point, however," she continued, addressing Mrs. Vernoyse direct, "I must remain firm, for I cannot and will not permit Laura to use my money in the manner she was doing previous to my withholding her allowance."

"My dear Mrs. Burton," said Mrs. Vernoyse calmly, "your money is your own to dispose of as you see fit, and I do not presume to dictate. I merely stated that you do not sufficiently appreciate Laura's noble intentions. Humanity as a rule is selfish. Girls possessed of her qualities are rare, and I believe she should be encouraged, rather than have her opinions ignored or set aside. But enough has been said on that subject. The point is this: it is objectionable to you to have your money spent in the manner she prefers. Your objections are sustained. But it is *not* objectionable to me to have mine spent in that way, and I have this day made



her my heir. My last act before driving here from my lawyer's office was to sign my will, made principally in her favor."

This announcement was indeed startling. Mrs. Burton finally asked why Laura had been made the recipient of so magnanimous a favor.

"Because," was the prompt reply, "she is the most worthy person of my acquaintance. My dear," she added, turning to Laura, "on the first day of each month during my life you will receive five hundred dollars to use in your own way. At my death you will receive the bulk of my property; all in fact, with the exception of a few bequests to old and faithful servants, twelve thousand a year to an orphanage I am interested in, and a few thousand each to a couple of frivolous nieces whom I most cordially dislike. A few other charities will be found in my will, which shall be entrusted to you as sole executrix. You will have my blessing as well, and so will the unfortunate people and defenceless dumb creatures which I know you will bring comfort to and protect."

Mrs. Vernoyse rose, bade a hasty adieu and escaped to her carriage.

Helen evidently felt the influence of the green-eyed monster. Mrs. Burton realized that her autocratic power over Laura was at an end; Laura was entirely independent of her, legally and financially, if she chose to assert her independence.

An hour or two later a messenger called with a note for Laura. Exercising her maternal prerogative Mrs. Burton opened it and read:

“ My dear Laura :—Should your mother be displeased because of my voluntary act and hereafter refuse to provide the needful, inform me at once and your monthly allowance will be doubled.

Sincerely yours,

EUTOLA VERNOLSE.”

Laura was not made “ purse-proud ” by her good fortune, nevertheless it gave her a feeling of ease and intense satisfaction.

Early in February Mrs. Burton received cards of invitation for herself and family to attend a musicale at Mrs. Winfield Cameron's on the evening of St. Valentine's day, and the invitation was accepted.

Mrs. Winfield Cameron's musicales were very delightful affairs and somewhat distinctive, the programmes being original with the hostess. The talent on these occasions was the best that could be secured. After the music refreshments were served, then the guests assembled in the ball-room for one hour of dancing. At the expiration of that time their carriages were promptly at the door, it being a well-established fact that Mrs. Cameron objected to late hours.

The ball-room for St. Valentine's musicale was most beautifully decorated and the floral designs were exceedingly unique. Laura was attracted to one representing a folded valentine of mammoth size resting on an onyx pedestal. On turning away after admiring it she suddenly started, flushed, then paled ; for slowly advancing toward her was Mr.

Harold Cornell. Evidently he had not seen her, and she earnestly hoped that he would turn aside and she escape unnoticed. But he came directly toward her. A dazed feeling took possession of her; she longed to flee, to sink from sight, but that was impossible. The next moment he raised his eyes and saw her. His face lighted, and he stepped eagerly forward.

“Miss Burton, this is indeed a pleasure; it seems ages since I saw you.”

A volume of confused words rushed to her mind but they remained unuttered. Quickly re-asserting herself she laughed lightly.

“Not ages,” she replied, “although it has been some time since we left ‘Wildwood.’ Have you been spending the winter in town, Mr. Cornell?”

“Only a few weeks of it; I have been in Florida most of the time. However, I found opportunity to call upon you twice but on both occasions you were not at home.”

“Indeed, I was not aware that you had called. Strange my mother or sister never mentioned it.”

“I did not see them, and I doubt if they knew. When the footman said you were out I merely left my card.”

“My being out should have made no difference,” she returned, while the color deepened in her cheeks. “My mother would have been pleased to see you I am sure. By the way, your youthful admirer, Miss Lillian, often speaks of you and regrets that her delightful walks are a thing of the past.”

"And you?" he asked, giving her a quick look.

She smiled indifferently. "I? O, I enjoyed them thoroughly. I am an ardent admirer of rural scenery, and the scenery surrounding 'Wildwood' is charming. Besides, I take great pleasure in Lillian's happiness."

A look of disappointment came to his eyes. "Lillian is quite an interesting character," he said. "I am very fond of children, and am glad she remembers me so kindly. The innocence and frankness of childhood is indeed refreshing after contact with worldly-wise people. If a child likes you it will not hesitate to let you know. It is not influenced by the restraint of social customs."

"In many ways children have greater freedom than grown people," said Laura, her manner indicating that what he said did not in any way apply to her.

"The last time I saw either of you," he resumed, "was that morning in September when I overtook you with my horse. I wonder if Miss Lillian still has the autumn leaves I gave her?"

"I presume she has; she admired them very much."

"And—I gave you some, did I not?"

"Yes—I believe you did; they were very pretty too, if I remember."

Laura was entirely self-possessed; no sign of disquietude was visible, and her indifference was so admirably assumed that no one would have suspected she had once shed tears over those same

leaves because of their associations. As for Mr. Cornell, he was thoroughly deceived, and thought she had almost forgotten that he had ever given them to her. During their conversation he mentioned that he would sail for London on the following Thursday.

"Thursday of this week?" she asked.

"Yes—the day after to-morrow."

"You choose an unpleasant time of the year if you are going for pleasure," she remarked indifferently.

"I am going principally on business," he replied, "or rather in the search of some claims."

"Ancestral claims?" she asked smilingly.

"Yes, ancestral," he replied, "although many generations removed."

"Are you going alone, or—"

She was about to say "does Mrs. Cornell accompany you?" But suddenly remembering that he had never even intimated having a wife, and not wishing him to think she had been sufficiently interested to ascertain the fact for herself, she quickly added instead, "or are you going with a party of friends?"

"I am going quite alone," he answered, "and as I go Thursday I would be pleased to call on you to-morrow morning."

"My mother will be delighted to see you," she replied frankly. "She has often spoken of your neighborly kindness last summer. As for myself, Mr. Cornell, I am sorry I shall not be able to see you. I have an engagement for luncheon to-morrow."

Just then young Mr. Vanderbeck approached and claimed her for the next waltz. She bowed slightly to Mr. Cornell and turned away, but suddenly turned back.

“Our carriage will be waiting when this waltz is ended,” she said, “and as I shall not see you again I will say good-bye now, and wish you *bon voyage*.” She gracefully gave him the tips of her fingers, smiled friendlily and sailed away on young Vanderbeck’s arm. Her cheeks were unnaturally flushed, her eyes sparkling, but her evening’s pleasure was ended. She conversed mechanically with her partner in the dance, but was glad when it was finished for she longed to be alone.

When in her apartments that night a decided change came over her; she looked pale and dejected. “Yes,” she moaned, “I love him yet; love him knowing that he has a wife. Am I demoralized? Am I no longer the pure, high-minded girl I am supposed to be? Oh! why can I not forget him? I don’t want to think of him; thoughts of him only make me miserable.”



## CHAPTER XII.



THE next morning Laura went to Mrs. Vernoyse earlier than usual. "If I am not intruding," she said, "and if you want me I will spend the day with you."

Mrs. Vernoyse did want her and she remained, returning home only in time for their seven o'clock dinner. Then she ascertained that Mr. Cornell had not called.

"Why did he not call to see mother, and Helen, and Lillian?" she questioned. "Why should he ask for a confidential visit with me? Is it possible he cares for me? If so, he should have sense enough to shun my society and not encourage such a sentiment."

The next morning after the sailing hour had passed for the steamer on which Mr. Cornell was to embark, Laura burst into tears. But she tried to believe they were only from wounded pride because he had deceived her and because he believed her to be deceived still.

Some two weeks afterwards she received a letter bearing a London postmark. The writing was unknown, nevertheless her hand trembled as she withdrew it from the envelope and glanced at the signa-

ture, which was "Harold L. Cornell." The letter ran:—

"The Langham, London, March 2d, 18—.

Dear Miss Burton:—If you consider this a liberty I beg that you will pardon it; but at all hazards I am determined to write you and run the chances of winning your favor or disfavor. You have scarcely been out of my thoughts since I saw you last, and I will frankly state that on that occasion I was greatly disappointed. I was hoping for a confidential talk with you, but circumstances conspired against me; what I desired to say remained unsaid. And now being unwilling to wait until I return to New York, I am compelled to write that which I would much prefer and had hoped to have said to you.

They say woman's intuitions are keen; then you must know how much I love you, that I have loved you from the first hour we met. I had dared to hope that in a measure my affection was returned, but that night at Mrs. Cameron's musicale I fancied you treated me indifferently; there was something in your manner that pained me very much, and I longed to see you alone—away from the excitement of the ball-room. But again fate prevented.

And now I hope that you will not keep me in suspense but let me know immediately that my love for you is not in vain. If assured that your feelings are responsive to my own, I will write more fully and arrange to return early in June, and establish myself at 'Glenmoyne' in the hope of



living over again those delightful summer days which are now but pleasant memories. If you give me no hope I shall remain abroad during the year.

Until I hear from you I shall be in eager suspense.

Sincerely yours,

HAROLD L. CORNELL."

Laura folded the letter and concealed it in her desk, then sat down to think it over. Her face was pale; an angry light shone from her eyes.

"Was ever a woman more insulted than he has insulted me?" she questioned. "And he does not know that I will feel insulted; he believes that I have no knowledge of his wife. How depraved he is! and I thought him so gentlemanly, so honorable. What a revelation!" She suddenly sprang to her feet. "Why do I not hate him?" she cried. "Why has he dared to make such a proposition to me? Do I hate him or do I not? I cannot analyze my feelings. I certainly despise his treachery and his loose morals; I have always blamed myself for my feelings toward him, but from now on the blame shall rest with him."

She suddenly remembered his reply to Lillian when asked if he were married. He had said: "Come to 'Glenmoyne' as often as you please, there is no Mrs. Cornell to like or dislike your coming." His answer impressed her very differently now from what it had then. "Yes," was her verdict, "I see it all now, and begin to understand his motive for the deception."

She half resolved to write and state unreservedly her opinion of his conduct and forbid him under any circumstances to ever address her again, either verbally or by pen. Then she changed her mind and decided to treat both him and his letter with silent contempt.

"If I ever meet him," she muttered, "I will tell him just what I think, but I will not implicate myself by writing. The letter might go astray or fall into other hands, — his wife's, possibly — then I would be denounced for having cause to write him on such grounds."

Taking the letter from her desk she tore it up, threw the pieces into the grate and watched them turn into ashes.

"This is the end of my first love affair," she sighed, "and if Mr. Cornell is a sample of men, I hope it will be my last." Within the next few days something transpired to take her mind for a time into another channel and as early as eleven o'clock one morning she rang the bell at Mrs. Vernoyse's residence. On being ushered in she found Mrs. Vernoyse dressed to go out.

"I am sorry I have come so inopportunately," began Laura, "but I felt that I must consult with you at once."

"My dear Laura, no apologies are necessary. You know that you are always welcome. But tell me what has developed now and in what direction."

"In the direction of the Emporium," replied Laura.

“Humph! What need you care for the Emporium, that is, so far as it is financially concerned? But what has happened?”

“Am I not detaining you? I can as well wait until some other time.”

“No dear, I prefer to hear now. My going out is of no great importance — a few hours later will do as well, and then if you like you may accompany me. Now tell me the news.”

“I have nothing to tell except that my mother has discovered everything. Yesterday while at the Emporium I stepped into the rear reception-room to discuss some matters with Madame Dupont, when who should walk in but my mother. It seems she wished to order something special which was not displayed, and the saleswoman in attendance ushered her into the room to examine a case of imported goods just received, in order to give her the benefit of a first selection.”

“Quite a surprise to you, I imagine. What did your mother say?”

“In all probability she would have thought my errand similar to her own had not Madame asked my opinion on certain matters relating to the business. While advising with her my mother stepped directly in front of me, a faint ironical smile visible on her face. Then as if suddenly aware of my presence she stepped forward and spoke to me. I returned her greeting and we chatted friendlily for a few moments, then left the place together.”

“And what did Madame Dupont say?”

"Not a word. She was actually pale, and evidently feared the discovery would prove disastrous."

"And what did your mother say when you reached the street?"

"She simply requested me to drive home with her, which I did; and during the drive she never referred to the matter. But on reaching home she promptly demanded an explanation of what she had accidentally overheard."

"Did you satisfy her demand?"

"Completely."

"How did she receive it?"

"She appeared more astonished than otherwise, and I must say treated the matter very differently from what I anticipated, and from what she would have done a few months ago."

"I don't doubt it," returned Mrs. Vernoyse dryly. "She knows that I will look after your interests if she does not. Well, how did the matter end?"

"It has not ended. She rather complimented me for having so successfully established so pretentious an affair as the Emporium, and admitted that my motive was not only an original but a worthy one. Nevertheless, she insisted that I should disconnect myself with the Emporium at once, and begged that the fact of my having been connected with it be kept secret."

"How does she propose that you dispose of it? Give it away after all your labor and trouble?"

"O no. Within an hour she went back to see Madame, and suggested that she buy the business."

“What did Madame say?”

“She said that it was the opportunity of her life but she lacked the means. Then my mother made her two offers. One was to loan her the money to buy the place outright, and take a mortgage on the stock; the other was for Madame to pay on instalments as she could, she herself being security.”

“Which offer does Madame Dupont favor?”

“The first.”

“What is she waiting for?”

“For my decision, and I am awaiting yours.”

Mrs. Vernoyse meditated a moment, then replied: “Let her have it. Your mother can loan her the money, take a mortgage and assume all risks. Then Madame can pay you in cash down. But listen. Tell Madame that she can have the place only on condition that she carry out your original plan concerning birds. Let her have all at the invoice prices, but have the contract drawn stipulating that it must be conducted with the same policy, and a proviso that a forfeit of five thousand dollars will be required of her if the contract is violated. And then you may consider yourself well out of it.”

After luncheon Mrs. Vernoyse invited Laura to accompany her in behalf of a pet scheme she had on hand.

“I have two of them, in fact,” she said. “One is the founding of a Home for Children. The other for lost or homeless animals. In order to do this I have to see two distinct classes of people. One class will do for the children, but would not

discommode themselves one iota for unfortunate animals. That class I appeal to only in behalf of my Home for Children. It shall be non-sectarian and exclusively for the benefit of those in need, be they legitimate or otherwise, having parents or orphans. Our institutions as a rule consist of too much red tape. A poor mother taking a child to one of them must give full surrender, and go away with an aching heart, knowing she will never see her darling again or know its fate. It is hard; it is cruel. That mother may love her child as fondly as rich mothers love theirs, but because she is unable to provide for it she must lose all trace forever, even though later on she may be in better circumstances and eager to resume its care. Some institutions will admit only illegitimate children, others will admit only those under two years, and so on. My aim, however, is to found a Home in every way comfortable and pleasant, which shall be open to any child no matter how young. Should the parents' circumstances become such that they desire to care for the child themselves, they can do so, providing they are worthy people who will not abuse the trust. Furthermore, the parents will be at liberty to visit their children at their own convenience instead of at the convenience of the institutions. The place will be run on humane principles, with no red tape, and with an utter lack of that seeming heartlessness which is a characteristic of too many of our charitable institutions.

“ My second scheme is to found a home where

lost or homeless animals may find food and shelter until the former are claimed by their owners. They will be kindly cared for two weeks free of charge. If within that time they are claimed, all right, the owners can take them and welcome. If, however, they are able to pay and feel inclined to do so, they may, and all such monies will go toward the general fund. On the other hand, all animals not claimed within the specified time belong to the institution. Good homes will be found for them if possible, otherwise in time they will be destroyed in a merciful way."

"What will you do to-day toward promoting your schemes?" asked Laura.

"I will call upon a number of ladies whom I hope to interest and whose co-operation I hope to secure as patronesses. And I shall be pleased to have you accompany me."

Laura willingly consented.

"We will first see the ladies in behalf of the orphan's home," said Mrs. Vernoyse; "and then, if too late, we can postpone the other matter until to-morrow."

She handed a list of calls to her coachman and they drove away. Ere long the carriage halted, and Laura followed Mrs. Vernoyse up the steps of an imposing brown-stone residence without paying the slightest heed as to where they were. Their cards were sent up and they were ushered into a reception-room. Soon the rustle of silken skirts was heard descending the stairs and a handsomely attired

woman entered, who greeted Mrs. Vernoyse most graciously.

Laura involuntarily started, for in her she beheld the woman whom she had seen with Mr. Cornell; the woman whose face had haunted her so many weeks. The same blonde hair, the same steel-blue eyes. The hostess turned to greet her, and Mrs. Vernoyse confirmed her suspicions by presenting her to Mrs. Cornell. She received the introduction calmly, then sank back in her chair and wondered what strange fatality had brought her to that house.

Mrs. Vernoyse at once explained the object of her call, and asked Mrs. Cornell's opinion of the project she had in view.

"I think it a very commendable one indeed; and I hope it may be a grand success. It surely ought to be with Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse to help it."

"And with Mrs. H. L. Cornell's name to head the list," returned Mrs. Vernoyse with equal flattery. "You see," she added facetiously, "I wish to give your name prominence in order that my scheme may have a good send-off."

Mrs. Vernoyse had made a diplomatic stroke. She well knew the weak, vain nature of the woman with whom she had to deal, and that only by flattery or device could Mrs. Cornell's name be secured. Without parley Mrs. Cornell put down her name for five hundred dollars. After expressing her thanks Mrs. Vernoyse rose to go; but Mrs. Cornell insisted that she and Miss Burton remain and have tea with her.



“I am quite alone to-day,” she said. “My husband is still in London looking after those horrid ancestral claims. The children are attending the birthday party of a little friend. So it would be a real blessing for you to remain. Besides, it is after three o’clock ; you could do but little in the interest of your orphanage to-day. Then why not remain and begin earlier to-morrow?”

Mrs. Vernoyse consulted Laura, who she fully expected on some pretext would decline, but to her surprise Laura replied :

“I think Mrs. Cornell is quite right. It is rather late, and having made so good a beginning you can well afford to wait until to-morrow.”

“So charming of you, Miss Burton, to be informal,” exclaimed Mrs. Cornell. Then she ushered them up stairs to remove their wraps.



## CHAPTER XIII.



AURA had not remained because she was favorably impressed with Mrs. Cornell, or because she had any desire to continue her acquaintance after that day.

But there seemed to her a strange fascination in the fact that this walking fashion-plate was Harold Cornell's wife, and that unconsciously she had been brought into her very home.

"It's only morbid curiosity, I suppose, which prompts me to remain," she soliloquized; "but fate brought me here; I may never meet her again, so I will improve the opportunity to discover if I can why Harold Cornell does not love his handsome wife, why he forgets her, forgets his marriage vows, forgets his children, and wrongs me as well as them by offering me his illicit love."

After removing their wraps Mrs. Cornell conducted her guests to a charming room off the parlor, where a cheerful log-fire was burning. Laura carelessly took up a basket of photographs and began looking them over. The second one she looked at was Mr. Cornell. Mrs. Vernoyse and her hostess being engaged in conversation she had ample time to closely study his features without being observed.

"How frank, how sincere he looks," was her

mental comment. "How unlike what he really is. Never was I deceived in a person as I have been in him. Never have I known an expression indicating such nobility of character to be so false."

She replaced the photographs in the basket and glanced towards Mrs. Cornell, wondering if she were happy, if she loved him, if she had faith in him.

"Can she be perfectly ignorant of his real character? If so, I pity her and wonder if she would be unhappy if she knew."

And yet Mrs. Cornell did not impress Laura as a woman very much in need of sympathy. She seemed too cold, too calculating, to take any matter pertaining to the affections very much to heart.

"But she is a woman," thought Laura, "and her husband has made love to me. What the result would be if she knew I cannot imagine. She looks like a woman who would create a scandal out of revenge, and disgrace me forever."

At that moment she caught Mrs. Cornell's eyes fixed searchingly upon her as though reading her inmost soul. Involuntarily she shrank from their gaze. Not that she was in any way guilty, but their cold unsympathetic expression repelled her, and she was thankful that she had not answered Mr. Cornell's letter.

"Had I done so, he might carelessly have failed to destroy it and in some manner it might have fallen into her hands. And heaven help the person who incurs her jealousy or enmity."

When the new project had been discussed to Mrs. Vernoyse' satisfaction, she referred to her intention relative to a home for dumb animals. But Mrs. Cornell did not manifest the slightest interest.

"I am interested in children," she said, "because I have children of my own whom I idolize, and naturally I sympathize with others less fortunate."

"Quite right," was Mrs. Vernoyse' brief response.

"And have you no sympathy for unfortunate animals as well?" asked Laura.

"I have never troubled myself very much about them," was her reply. "My children absorb my mind almost to the exclusion of anything else."

People of a similar mould would no doubt have pronounced that a very noble sentiment. Laura Burton, however, did not. She considered Mrs. Cornell's mind very contracted, very shallow, and extremely selfish, if two children, and they simply because a part of herself, filled it so completely that she had no thought for anything else in the world.

"I like fine horses," remarked Mrs. Cornell, "because of their grace and beauty, besides they are so useful to us."

It was clearly evident that Mrs. Cornell was too selfish to care for anything outside her own family except from a useful point of view.

"Are you fond of birds?" asked Laura.

"Well, yes and no. I am fond of canaries if they are good singers, but I would not give one house-room otherwise. I have been unfortunate,

however, with birds. I once had a lovely singer named Otto. He was a beauty too, but while I was ill last fall he was neglected and actually starved to death. Mr. Cornell found him dead in his cage with neither seed nor water. Shocking, wasn't it?"

"'Shocking' doesn't express it!" exclaimed Mrs. Vernoyse. "Were not the servants instructed to look after it?"

"I don't know as the bird was particularly specified, but I supposed of course it would be attended regularly."

Had Mrs. Vernoyse spoken her mind she would have said: "You no doubt gave instructions each day concerning your children, to secure their every comfort when they could make their wants known; but you never once thought of your poor caged bird."

Aloud she said: "Was it not the same one I once saw hanging in the lower hall?"

"Yes, the very same."

"I pitied him then," she proceeded; "he seemed so lonely there—banished, as it were, with no one to notice him. Birds like to be noticed and spoken to occasionally and it seems cruel to isolate them. We are too apt to be thoughtless about such things. We ourselves cannot endure isolation; to be happy we must constantly be surrounded by friends, and yet we lack consideration for our poor birds."

"I would have hung Otto in my own apartments," said Mrs. Cornell, "but he scattered his seed so

profusely that the floor around him would have been a sight."

"Even so," said Mrs. Vernoyse, "though after all clean canary seed isn't so dreadful, and one of the servants might have brushed it up now and then."

"The annoyance could easily have been remedied," remarked Laura suggestively. "A piece of pretty colored tarlatan, cream, pink, or blue; a yard or so of elastic tape, and a few minutes' work would have made a screen to slip on from the bottom of the cage and around the sides as high as the seed dish and prevented any from scattering."

"I am sorry now that I did not have it done," said Mrs. Cornell, "for I do miss Otto's singing very much."

A look of contempt shot from Laura's eyes. Mrs. Cornell evidently had no thought of the suffering of the bird. She thought only of her own loss in being deprived of its song.

"I would have had another singer before this," she continued, "only Mr. Cornell has been so opposed to it."

Remembering her robin adventure Laura asked carelessly if Mr. Cornell disliked birds.

"O no, he is very fond of them," said Mrs. Cornell. "That is his excuse for not wanting another. He was terribly indignant on discovering Otto and feared another might share the same fate."

"Many people do not know how to treat birds," observed Mrs. Vernoyse, "consequently they are subjected to far more cruelty than we have any idea

of. Many times they hang in the hot sun until quite overcome with heat; in winter they hang where they suffer with cold. Again, they are hung in a draught, or in an open window when a shower comes up until they are drenched; or worse than all, they are placed on a table or hung so low that the cat catches them."

"That reminds me of poor Don!" exclaimed Mrs. Cornell. "He was another lovely singer I once had, but the cat caught him and I've hated cats ever since."

"Where was your bird when the cat caught it?" asked Mrs. Vernoyse.

"He was standing on the floor. I had just given him a bath and had not yet hung him up, when that horrid cat walked in and seized him."

"Mrs. Cornell," said Mrs. Vernoyse, gravely, "we must believe in a Divine Creator."

"Why, certainly."

"And we must believe He created all animals and gave them their different natures."

"Most assuredly."

"Well, I suppose then we must believe that the Divine Creator gave cats the nature to destroy birds."

"Yes, I presume He did."

"Why, then, should we hate cats for possessing that nature?"

"You surely would not intimate," replied Mrs. Cornell hesitatingly, "that the Creator is to blame?"

"O no. I would only say that if, knowing the

cat's nature, we leave our birds within their reach, it seems to me we should justly blame ourselves. Of course, Mrs. Cornell," she explained with apology in her tone, "I am speaking on general principles only. People do not hesitate," she continued, "to kill a cow or an ox that they may eat beef. They separate innocent lambs from their mothers and kill them for food. And yet, if a cat kills a bird and makes a meal of it, many people with more temper than good sense think its crime is inexcusable, and would punish the animal or have it killed. What inconsistency!" Mentally she added: "How much better things some people expect of cats than they do of themselves."

"Speaking of birds," said Mrs. Cornell, as though desirous of changing the subject, "reminds me of the millinery Emporium. The place is really one of the best in the city, but I have discovered the proprietor to be such a tricky, deceitful creature that I intend to withdraw my patronage."

Laura looked intently at an etching on an easel across the room. But Mrs. Vernoyse carelessly asked the name of the proprietor and in what way she was tricky.

"Her name is Madame Dupont," replied Mrs. Cornell, "and her trickery consists in selling goods under false pretensions. For instance, she tries to convince her patrons that birds are no longer fashionable for millinery purposes; that they are being discarded by the *élite* and leaders of fashion in Paris, and she is endeavoring to have them discarded here."



"What is there tricky about that?" asked Mrs. Vernoyse.

"The mere fact of its being false," replied Mrs. Cornell. "The truth of the matter is, Madame Dupont is opposed to birds as ornaments, because so many are killed for that purpose, and she is trying to abolish the practice by pretending that they are unfashionable. Did you ever hear of such deception and fraud?"

"Well, it seems to me that her course is less to be condemned than the slaughtering of the birds, or even the wearing of them."

"But I do not think," said Mrs. Cornell, "that she has acted quite honorably towards her patrons."

"I have heard," replied Mrs. Vernoyse, "much in approval of Madame Dupont, and I doubt whether she could accomplish her object in any other manner, there are so many who can be appealed to only through their vanity."

Mrs. Cornell ventured no reply.

"You certainly do not approve," proceeded Mrs. Vernoyse, "of the destruction of our beautiful song-birds?"

"O no, I cannot say that; but they must die some time, you know, and really I don't see that it makes much difference how or when."

"I read in my evening paper the other day," Mrs. Vernoyse continued, "that more than forty million humming-birds, sea-birds, orioles, sea-gulls, red-birds, wax-wings, birds of paradise, and fly-catchers are annually used in decorating women's

hats, and surely you would not encourage such wholesale destruction for such a purpose."

Mrs. Cornell had no defence, so she appeared to smilingly acquiesce with Mrs. Vernoyse' rather forceful reasoning.

"How did your husband feel over your bird Don?" asked Laura curiously.

"He was quite shocked, but," added Mrs. Cornell good humoredly, "I imagine he felt very much as Mrs. Vernoyse does. He blamed me entirely, and said there was no sense in denouncing a cat for killing a bird and applauding it for catching a mouse, unless it had been properly trained, as otherwise the cat knew no difference."

"Quite logical," assented Mrs. Vernoyse. "Mr. Cornell is evidently a friend of animals."

"Yes indeed. If he had his way he'd turn the house into a perfect menagerie; but I veto all that, I assure you. As for dogs, I am positively afraid of them and won't allow one in the house. He has often threatened to build himself a bungalow in some retired spot where he can spend his summers, surrounded with as many dogs and animals of various kinds as he likes, but his threat has never been put into execution."

Laura remembered "Glenmoyne," with its horses, dogs and cats, its deer and rabbits, and began (as she thought) to understand why no Mrs. Cornell reigned there.

"No wonder," she mused, "that some men commit acts they would never think of committing were

they not driven to do so by selfish, exacting wives. Mrs. Cornell, for instance, is surrounded by every luxury, and yet she denies her husband the simple privilege of having a dog."

"Why do you object to dogs?" asked Mrs. Vernoyse of her hostess.

"Because to me they are odious creatures and I am dreadfully afraid of them. I would cross the street any time rather than meet one."

"You surely are not afraid of all dogs?"

"Yes, all. I make no distinction; to me they are all alike. I have a friend who has two thorough-breds which she considers quite wonderful in their way, but knowing my sentiments on the dog question, whenever I call on her she is very particular to have them both kept out of sight."

"Are they vicious?" asked Laura.

"My friend says not; on the contrary she assures me they are perfectly gentle and never injured anyone in their lives."

"Then why are you so afraid of them?"

"Simply because they are dogs."

"That, I cannot understand," remarked Mrs. Vernoyse, endeavoring to conceal the disgust she felt because of such cowardice. "There are fierce, vicious dogs," she continued, "and there are fierce, vicious people; but because one man is a robber, who would murder me if necessary, it seems hardly logical that I should fear all mankind. I think dogs, as a rule, are very noble, intelligent animals. Many a life has been saved by their sagacity. A

good watch-dog is an almost indispensable acquisition to a household as a protector, and is an invaluable companion to children if their parents wish to develop in them humane instincts."

"You seem fond of all animals," observed Mrs. Cornell, "but you surely draw the line at cows. During my girlhood I spent a day on a farm where they had three. At milking-time curiosity took me to the 'cow-yard,' and such stupid-looking creatures I never saw before. They stood there looking as sleepy and uninteresting as possible, mechanically chewing away at something, 'cud,' I believe the farmer called it, whatever that is."

"I think your opinion of cows was too hastily formed," replied Mrs. Vernoyse. "Mine differs entirely, and you will see that I had an excellent opportunity to judge when I tell you that I once spent two months on a farm where there were fifty cows, and during that time I was in the milking-yard nearly every day. Besides, I often wandered out among them in the pasture, fed them with salt from my hand, patted their heads, and made friends with them generally."

"I don't see how you could bear to touch them," exclaimed Mrs. Cornell.

"Bear to touch them?" repeated Mrs. Vernoyse. "Bear to touch the cows that give us our milk, our cream, our butter, our beef? Why not?"


"For fear of their horns. I would not have ventured near them for anything."

"I experienced no such fear. To me they seemed

very gentle, although I admit there are now and then exceptional cases, but those I am speaking of were owned by a man who permitted no abuse. At milking-time there was no panic among them; they feared no kicks nor blows from the milkers; their dispositions were in no way ruined. Many cows are not so fortunate. They are pastured in fields without shade and with insufficient water. They suffer from heat and thirst, they are driven from the pasture on the run, which is very injurious to them previous to being milked. Then they are shouted at by the milkers, kicked, and often pounded with the milking-stool if restless because of being tormented with flies, until altogether they are in a fever of excitement. The cow is, I think, a much abused animal, and considering the great part it plays in our domestic economy ought to be properly appreciated and receive kind treatment."



## CHAPTER XIV.

“ NEVER heard so much said in favor of cows before in all my life,” said Mrs. Cornell. “Really they are quite interesting after all.”

“And well worth knowing about,” was the rejoinder. “But to change the subject. Speaking of your fear of dogs reminded me of once hearing you speak of attending a fox-hunt when in England. Were you not afraid that some of those hounds would attack you?”

“Not in the least. They were too actively engaged in trying to catch the fox.”

“O indeed! What a terrible thing it would have been had one of those hounds in the slightest manner injured any of the ladies or gentlemen! And yet, who among such parties has a thought for the terrified fox that is being hounded to death by a whole pack? The fox has feeling, the fox suffers; it knows it is to be torn in pieces; but who cares? I think fox-hunts are brutal and demoralizing, and how refined people can enjoy them is beyond my comprehension.”

“I assure you, Mrs. Vernoyse,” returned Mrs. Cornell, “I never attended the chase but once in

my life, and that was unavoidable as I was a guest at the time of the people who owned the hounds."

"We know," said Mrs. Vernoyse, "that these things are going on all the time and are upheld by people from whom we should expect better things."

"What is your opinion of the 'chase,' Miss Burton?" asked the hostess.

"I quite agree with Mrs. Vernoyse," replied Laura. "I consider cruelty to animals one of the gravest sins committed. Not half enough is said or written on the subject as only a comparative few have taken the matter up. But those few are earnest, heroic in their efforts, and are doing a grand work; but the masses are as yet indifferent to the suffering of the lower animals."

"I oppose the 'chase' for other reasons," continued Mrs. Vernoyse. "Consider the horses, for instance, in those cross-country runs. They shrink from the jumps they are compelled to make; they often fall and break a leg or otherwise injure themselves and their riders as well. The riders, however, go into the thing voluntarily, taking all chances the horses do not. With them it is a case of force. Those detestable steeple-chase races are really an abomination too. I actually know of four horses being so badly injured at a race-track near New York that they had to be taken from the track and shot. And the papers encourage it. I have often wondered why. It is to be hoped that steeple-chase racing will yet be prohibited by law. The law often interferes with acts far less sinful."

"The people evidently enjoy them," observed Mrs. Cornell.

"I am not speaking from the peoples' side of the question," was the reply, "but from the horses' entirely, and—the humane side. Some people enjoy bull-fights. But let them find other means of enjoyment; something that is not liable to sacrifice the life of a horse to their pleasure. I can name people, however, who occasionally attend the races but who would not witness a steeple-chase because of the revolting possibilities liable to occur. Besides, they will not encourage them by their presence."

"Some people are extremists."

"Yes," assented Mrs. Vernoyse, "and when they are, it is well to have their extremes on the humane side. Better that, a thousand times, than by neutrality encourage such cruelty to continue."

"I think," said Laura, "that the greater cruelty exists among the uneducated classes. But the docked-tails of horses and dogs, and the tight checks, and cut ears, prove that it also exists to a great extent among the more cultured element. With them, however, cruelty is mainly in the carrying out of some fad or fashion. Among the uneducated it is more in the form of kicks, clubbing, and neglect. I have seen truck-drivers unmercifully beat their horses for accidentally slipping on the stone pavement when drawing with all their strength a heavy load. Teamsters in our large cities are often in the police courts charged with cruelty to their horses.



Wife-beating and horse-whipping are not very far removed with such a class. They do not realize that they owe their living to the horses they abuse with such apparent delight. Business men owning horses should take more interest in them and make it compulsory with their drivers to treat them kindly. If they fail to do so immediate discharge should be the penalty."

"What about the man losing his position with perhaps a family to support?" asked Mrs. Cornell.

"It would be his own fault; he should consider that beforehand. His employer, however, could easily judge if his regrets were sincere and he could be re-engaged on agreeing to never repeat the offence. Then he would begin to realize that he owed something to the horse."

"Men who abuse horses are brutes!" exclaimed Mrs. Vernoyse, "and they deserve to suffer. The only way to punish them is to administer doses of their own medicine on the principle that like cures like."

"A great many would require the medicine," responded Laura. "I have seen horses driven until they were ready to drop with thirst, and the drivers would never think to give them water, although they themselves would step into some corner saloon and get their drink. I have seen horses standing in the burning sun when they could just as well have been tied under shade-trees that were near. I have seen them in winter stand unblanketed with steam rising from them in clouds, caused by

hard driving, and afterwards learned they had been foundered. I have seen drivers yank at the bits until the horses foamed at the mouth and their lips were lacerated. I have seen them with the skin worn bare and swarms of flies gnawing into the raw flesh. Such things are inexcusable; they are criminal. Many of those horses had no tails with which to whisk away the flies and were helpless in their torment. Unfortunately for them they had once been owned by fashionable people, which fact accounted for their helpless condition.

“I have seen dogs chained out in the hot sun without a drop of water near them, and if they barked or whined for freedom they received a kick or a whip lash instead. Dogs often run about the streets until, overcome by heat and thirst, they go into a fit. In most cases of this kind a plentiful supply of cold water would produce beneficial results. Water to them is very essential, and if there were more drinking-places for them in our cities there would be fewer cases of real or imaginary hydrophobia, and many a panic would be averted, where terrified people shout ‘mad dog,’ and when policemen—who sometimes handle revolvers as awkwardly as they would crow-bars—shock the community by riddling the suffering creatures with bullets.

“I have seen fowls imprisoned where there was no sign of green grass or shade, oftentimes no water, and insufficient food. In summer they nearly roasted, in winter they were nearly frozen. Their

food was unsuited to the cold, the water was frozen in their dishes; and yet their owners blamed the hens for not laying more eggs. I have seen fowls brought into market packed like sardines, almost suffocated, no food, no drink, and the sun beating unmercifully upon them. This is a cruel but common condition of the traffic in live fowls, as any one can see by visiting Gansevoort market almost any day. And yet the authorities permit these inhumanities to continue with hardly a protest. It would take hours to enumerate the different forms of cruelty that exist, and it is sad indeed that kindness does not exist in such extremes instead."

Laura had spoken with feeling, and Mrs. Cornell, although not in sympathy with the subject, could not but admire her earnestness.

"Really, Miss Burton," she said, "you take this matter very seriously to heart, and evidently are a great observer. It is interesting to hear you. Positively your proper sphere is in the lecture-room. You would make any amount of converts."

"If the masses were mentally developed," returned Laura, "they would require no argument or conversion to make them gentle and kind. As for the lecture-room, there are hundreds there now, but do they ever refer to these subjects? No! Do our school-teachers take the matter up with their pupils as they should? No, not one in five hundred! How do I know? Because in numerous instances I have ascertained. Many a time on seeing school-boys throw stones at cats and dogs

in the streets I have questioned them as to whether their teachers ever taught them to be kind to animals, and invariably they have answered 'No.' Nor have their parents taught them, nor their Sunday-school teachers, nor have they inherited it. No wonder, then, that to them kindness is an unknown quantity, and that the acts of the genus 'small-boy' often outrival those of an uncivilized Indian.

"One of the first things a child should be taught is to avoid cruelty; to look upon it as unnecessary, vulgar, and unmanly. I think that our Boards of Education should insist that teachers promulgate the doctrine of kindness among their pupils and a liberal supply of lessons on such subjects should be in every school-reader, with this end in view. Clergymen should preach it from their pulpits, and with their vast influence accomplish wonderful results. I have listened to many a theological discourse, poetic, brilliant; but not a word was uttered regarding early impressions, and the essential need of instilling in children ideas of kindness to *God's lower animals*. What opportunities they fail to take advantage of! What a world of good our brilliant orators and renowned clergymen could do by occasionally referring to this subject and urging its importance upon their hearers. If our rising generation does not inherit kindness; if it is not taught at home, at school, in Sunday-school or church, what are we to expect from our future men and women, or from their children or grand-

children? This is to me a grave problem, and one which I regret to say is practically ignored."

"I am sure you are sufficiently heroic in the cause," said Mrs. Cornell laughingly, "and I repeat that you have missed your vocation."

"The children of to-day," remarked Mrs. Ver-noyse, "are most truly the men and women of the future, and their early training is of vast importance. Why clergymen, both Catholic and Protestant, do not more largely exert their influence in a humane way I cannot understand. And authors! I have read hundreds of them without finding one line in behalf of animals, although chapters were devoted to describing fox hunts, deer stalking, duck and pigeon shooting, and other sports called 'manly,' those who participated boasting of the birds or animals they had brought down. But not one word did the author say in disapproval—not one word in defence of the creatures so wantonly killed. What are authors and journalists thinking about, to be so indifferent to the cruelty in existence? They have golden opportunities to educate and influence the world; why do they not improve them? Does the reason of their silence mean sanction, or is it indifference? Either one of these reasons is censurable. Their opportunities for observation are unlimited, and the societies organized to prevent cruelty to animals need their aid. Their silence is equivalent to a refusal. Why then not give their aid freely and without being solicited?

"My experience with boys," proceeded Mrs.

Vernoyse, "is, that as a rule, they must be appealed to through their pride rather than their morals. If you tell boys that it is wicked to commit acts of cruelty, that it displeases the Lord, eight out of ten will stare at you exasperatingly, and go right on with their viciousness immediately your back is turned, preferring to settle with the Lord later on and take chances of future punishment. Different tactics are necessary to effect a change in the precocious youngster of the nineteenth century. If he is once convinced that it is cowardly to take advantage of defenceless animals, but manly and heroic to defend them, you have some hope of him. Or, if the boy be possessed of a vivid imagination, convince him that animals feel pain as acutely as he. Ask him if he would enjoy being beaten, kicked or stoned, or chased by a mob of boys and kept in a constant state of terror. Many boys possess imagination and sentiment which is capable of being aroused and developed into sympathy."

"My little Gracie is very sympathetic," said Mrs. Cornell, "and exactly like her father, both in disposition and looks. She will cry if she sees a man whip his horse on the street. As for Otto, I never dared tell her his fate. She thinks he escaped from his cage and flew out of the window, and if my husband had not found him dead I would have persuaded him to think the same. By the way, our conversation this afternoon would please him immensely. I often think he regrets that I am not more in sympathy with him on such subjects. Our

discussions are usually of the theatre, opera, Mrs. Blank's dinner-party, or something of the kind. But to-day's *tete-a-tete* has been an interesting innovation."

Mrs. Cornell smiled, but it was only a smile of the lips, and as insincere as her words.

"It is unfortunate that discussions of this kind are so out of the usual order," replied Mrs. Vernoyse. "The subject is one which should be under discussion at every fireside until people become more considerate and humane. But peoples' ideas of reform widely differ. For example, once when on a charitable mission I ran across a dirty-faced youngster who was beating his dog because it had upset a rudely-constructed cart to which it was attached. The dog's yelps disturbed the boy's mother, a hard-featured woman, who came rushing out, and taking hold of her young hopeful shook him roughly.

" 'I'll teach yez to make a dog holler like that and be after disturbin' the hull block!' she yelled. 'Now jist take that! an' that! an' that! giving him a bang to represent each 'that.' Then she disappeared within the grimy hallway.

"I asked the boy if he would ever beat the dog again, and amid his sobs he replied: 'Nex' time I'll take 'im roun' de corner so de ole woman can't hear 'im holler an' den I'll beat 'im.'"

"That was all the benefit he had derived from his mother's discipline. He had only learned another lesson in deception; he had no thought of pity for the poor dog, and was only waiting a better oppor-



tunity to continue his violence. That's one way to teach the young ideas to shoot. Now I'll give you another."

"But, Mrs. Vernoyse, did you not reprimand the boy?" asked Mrs. Cornell curiously.

"I did not exactly reprimand him, because the poor neglected child scarcely realized that he had done wrong. But I gave him as kindly a lesson as I could, and impressed it on his mind by accompanying it with a half dollar on condition that he would never again abuse his dog or any other animal, and that he would do all in his power to dissuade other boys from doing so."

"Have you any idea that he will heed what you said?"

"He may, and he may not. In any event it can do no harm, and may do much good. Besides, I have the satisfaction of having tried to promote a worthy cause."

"What about the other case you referred to?" asked Laura.

"O yes; I had forgotten. Well, as a singular coincidence, on the same street only a few blocks away another similar incident occurred, there being a dog, an upturned cart, a boy, and his mother. The boy in this instance was also ventilating his anger on a dog. His mother, on hearing the disturbance, ran out and took in the situation at a glance. Her face became very grave as she hurriedly stepped forward and withdrew a whip from the boy's hand.



“‘Why, Archie!’ she exclaimed. ‘I would not have believed this of you, only for witnessing it with my own eyes.’

“‘But, mamma,’ the boy answered, ‘Carlo wouldn’t do as I wanted him to, and he’s upset the cart, and broken the traces.’

“‘My child,’ replied the mother, ‘you very often fail to do as I want you to, but I don’t fly at you and beat you unmercifully. Just see how badly poor Carlo feels; he is smarting with pain too. Think how he loves you, how he follows you about, how he once saved you from drowning. You have forgotten all that now because he happened to displease you. But if Carlo were to die you would be very sorry and always remember your cruelty to him.’

“Her tone was not loud and angry, but grieved; and by that time the boy was crying with remorse. After the woman went in I approached him and asked if he were going to finish the punishment his mother had interrupted. He looked at me in wonder.

“‘No, mam,’ he replied, ‘I wouldn’t whip Carlo any more for anything in the world. I whipped him before because I was mad and didn’t stop to think.’

“That was the result of *his* mother’s discipline. She had appealed to his better nature and aroused his sympathy by setting his imagination to work. If our clergymen and teachers, as Miss Burton suggests, would adopt a similar course and give out a few object-lessons occasionally their influence would soon show results.”

Ere long Miss Gracie and Master Walter returned. Mrs. Vernoyse expressed a wish to see them, and Mrs. Cornell was about to send for them to be brought in, but Mrs. Vernoyse preferred going to the nursery instead.

“I like to see children when they are natural,” she explained, “and they are never that when placed on exhibition in a parlor.”

In the nursery they found Gracie, a sweet child, playing with a doll nearly as large as herself, while Walter was amusing himself at the expense of a forlorn-looking cat which he had pinioned to the floor by throwing one leg tightly across its back. The cat's discomfort did not trouble Mrs. Cornell in the least, but she was very indignant because of the cat's presence.”

“Myra,” she said, bestowing a severe look of rebuke on the nurse, “why do you allow that cat up here. Take it out at once and never let me find it here again.”

The nurse withdrew the cat from underneath Walter's leg, while he screamed and kicked at being deprived of his victim. Mrs. Cornell tried in vain to pacify him with promises of candies and bonbons, while Mrs. Vernoyse stroked the cat's head, at which it began to purr and evince delight at being noticed without being tormented.

“I don't see how you can bear to touch a cat,” said Mrs. Cornell, after the nurse had taken it from the room. “They seem to me such dirty things. besides they might scratch and bite.”

"I've had cats all my life," retorted Mrs. Ver-noyse, "and I was never scratched or bitten yet. As to their being dirty, that is a mere prejudice, as they are among the cleanest animals known. Give a cat an opportunity and it will take every advantage of it to keep cleanly. A dirty cat is the exception and not the rule."

"I've never bestowed that much thought upon them," replied Mrs. Cornell indifferently. "This one was here when we moved into the house two years ago, and I have permitted it to remain to keep the place clean of rats and mice. But I never allow it above the basement and never think of noticing it any more than if it were a stick."

"If shown any consideration," observed Laura, "cats develop into very intelligent animals. They appreciate attention too, and are so easily made happy that it seems a pity to deny them a kind word now and then."

Argument with Mrs. Cornell would have been useless. She was one of those superficial women who permit a prejudice, no matter how unfounded, to stand in the way of all common sense and reason. She could never be educated on broad-gauged principles; that time for her had passed. Her mind had not awakened to the realities of life surrounding her except they had contributed to her pleasure. Being the daughter of a millionaire whose grasping avarice had almost completely absorbed his time, she was left entirely to the care of nurses and governesses to develop without restraint the selfish and

egotistical instincts inherited from her father. Had her mother lived she might have been a very different woman. Her training in the most exclusive coterie of society, however, was evident in her perfect self-control as she listened to the scoring given to people of her own disposition. Also in her polite acquiescence in her guests' ideas while they only bored her, for she had no patience with the opinions of others if they differed from her own. Mrs. Cornell was only a type. There are others as well, whose minds are capable of absorbing only small quantities; it is useless then to administer to them large quantities of either philosophy or reasoning, for they lack the capacity to hold it.

From the nursery Mrs. Cornell conducted her guests to a daintily prepared tea. The conversation was on current topics, and the tea passed off rather pleasantly.



## CHAPTER XV.



URING their homeward drive Mrs. Ver-  
noyse asked Laura's opinion of Mrs.  
Cornell.

"I think her a very handsome wo-  
man," was the brief reply.

"Nonsense, I'm not thinking of her looks. Of course she's handsome—from an artist's standpoint; her worst enemies couldn't deny that. But what do you think of her as being a womanly woman?"

"She seems devoted to her children," returned Laura evasively.

"Certainly, and why not? Is not a cat devoted to her kittens? a tiger to her young? And yet that same tiger shows no love nor mercy for the young of any except her own. The tiger's love is extremely selfish, and in that respect Mrs. Cornell—like thousands of others—resembles both the tiger and the cat, which she so heartily despises. She loves her children because they are her own—a part of her dear self. I once heard her say, however, that if she were plain-looking, or lacked grace and style of figure, that she would be averse to having a family. As it is, she takes pride in seeing herself reproduced. But it is to be hoped that the reproducing

and rearing of our future generations will devolve upon more noble and more kindly disposed mothers — mothers capable of endowing their offspring with healthy brains and kindly dispositions as well as face and figure.”

“Mrs. Cornell is certainly a very striking woman,” responded Laura.

“That is what old Commodore Wakefield thought when he confidentially pronounced her an ‘egotistical fool,’” returned Mrs. Vernoyse. “Not very choice language, but he was a most estimable man for all that, and a hater of cant and hypocrisy. He became acquainted with the Cornells at Newport, and conceived a thorough dislike for her because of her being such a coward. Men have no respect for cowardly women. The timid, shrinking woman who screams at the sight of a mouse is out of date. Both sexes admire courage in a woman; cowardice is an ignoble trait, and despicable. Mrs. Cornell is a moral as well as a physical coward. Moral, because she appears to agree with you, hoping to secure your approbation; a physical coward because she is afraid of everything, dogs, cats, cows; afraid of a mouse, although she knows the mouse to be even more timid than herself, and that it will flee rather than molest her. In fact it is hard to say what she is not afraid of. Evidently she is not descended from a race of warriors.”

“What was the Commodore’s opinion of Mr. Cornell?” asked Laura.

“Decidedly different from that of his wife. He

considered Cornell a fine fellow, and quite her superior."

Laura leaned back in the carriage, obscured from the street lights, and carelessly asked Mrs. Vernoyse if she were personally acquainted with Mr. Cornell. She received an affirmative reply, Mrs. Vernoyse having met him frequently during a Newport season.

"Where do the Cornells spend the summer?" she next asked.

"Wherever fancy dictates, I believe."

"Where were they last summer?"

"Mrs. Cornell and the children went abroad with her sister, Mrs. Paul Wentworth, but I don't know where Mr. Cornell was, although I am certain he did not accompany them."

"Does he seem fond of his wife?"

"In a way, yes; still I don't believe he is entirely love-blind to her faults."

"He married her for better or for worse," returned Laura, "and even though she may have proved 'worse' he has no right to neglect her or prove untrue because of having discovered her faults at this late date."

"My dear," said Mrs. Vernoyse, "you speak as if you knew that Mr. Cornell was really guilty of neglecting her."

"Why did he not accompany her abroad?" asked Laura. "Why did he — a man of leisure — permit his wife and children to take such a trip without him, unless he had reasons of his own for remaining behind?"

“What can you possibly mean, child?”

“Simply that I am *not* the ‘child’ you think. I am more worldly-wise than you imagine; and Mr. Cornell may have been interested in some other woman to whom he wished to devote himself during his wife’s absence.”

“Why, Laura! Such a bitter expression from you is amazing. One would think you had a personal grudge against Mr. Cornell; but if you knew him your opinion would change at once.”

For the moment Laura was tempted to cry out: “I do know him! He is not the man of honor and integrity you believe him to be! He is false; he is living a double life; he has caused me many a heartache and shaken my faith in man.”

“Mrs. Cornell has no cause to complain of her husband neglecting her,” resumed Mrs. Vernoyse, “and she may consider herself fortunate too, for many men would not stand what he does. So far as possible he gratifies her every wish. If he failed she is quite capable of making him very uncomfortable. And yet, if he wishes anything of which she disapproves she does not hesitate to veto it point blank; and he submits to her tyranny in order to maintain peace in the household. Nevertheless, with some she is very popular, particularly those who only know her in a casual way. But she can be very ill-tempered and exacting if she likes. Did you notice how angry she was because that inoffensive cat was out of its domain? She seemed to exult over the fact that she never notices it any



more than she would a stick, as if it would demean her to notice the poor thing occasionally. Shocking of me to berate her in this manner after having 'eaten of her salt,' isn't it? But some people exasperate you so that you must give expression to your feelings."

"She unconsciously gave her candid opinion of me over Madame Dupont's shoulders," said Laura laughingly.

"I was about to tell you," continued Mrs. Vernoyse, "of a Mrs. Barrington I once knew, who permitted her child to amuse himself by tormenting a young pup. He pulled its tail, pinched its ears, poked its eyes nearly out, and did all that only a vicious, ill-bred child would think of doing. The poor pup was as thin as a rail, and had a worried expression pitiful to see. On asking Mrs. Barrington if it were sick, she replied, 'O no; Zip is perfectly well. But my Eddie is too much for him and torments him dreadfully.' With that she picked up the abused animal and tossed him back to his tormentor. Zip instinctively crawled away, but the mother roughly snatched him up again and placing him in the child's lap boxed his ears and bade him lie quiet. Poor little Zip hid his head under Eddie's apron, and lay there trembling, not knowing what to expect next. Mrs. Barrington laughingly assured me that Eddie had either destroyed or become wearied of all his other toys, and Zip, being the latest, was the only thing that amused him and kept him from screaming. So poor Zip was to be

sacrificed until he too was maimed, or destroyed, or wearied of. No noble-minded woman would have permitted such a thing or encouraged a child in such wanton instincts. But she seemed totally devoid of kindly feeling. She did not even teach the child to be gentle with poor Zip. To her he was only a dog and his discomfort not worth considering."

"What became of Zip?" asked Laura.

"You remember Nemo, my spaniel?"

"I do indeed."

"Well, Nemo was once little Zip. I could not endure to think of him in that rough boy's clutches, and the very next day I bought a handsome 'woolly bow-wow' and took it to him. It being far more showy than Zip he readily exchanged, and Mrs. Barrington gave Zip to me."

Until a late hour that night Laura sat speculating upon the events of the afternoon, wondering how Mr. Cornell would feel when he learned that inadvertently she had made the acquaintance of his wife. "He will think I purposely sought her," she mused, "and what motive will he imagine prompted me to do so."



## CHAPTER XVI.



**S**ATISFACTORY arrangements having been made, Madame Dupont, the nominal owner, became actual proprietor of the Emporium. One morning soon after the transaction Lillian came running to Laura with a letter.

“Where did you get this?” Laura asked, trying to speak easily.

“From the postman, auntie. I was on the steps listening to the organ-grinder when he came, so I brought it right up.”

Laura laid it aside as if it were of no importance. Lillian looked disappointed.

“Aren’t you going to read it, auntie,” she asked.

“Yes, dear, after the paper is read; the letter will keep, you know.”

“And so will the paper, auntie.”

“Yes, but the paper is full of news and interesting, while letters are oftentimes a bore. So many of them prove to be only advertisements, or cards of invitation to some millinery opening or something of the kind.”

“But, auntie,” was the persistent reply, “I am sure this is a real letter; and the postage stamp has a woman’s head on it instead of a man’s, and — seeing I brought it up I would really like to know.”

“Very well, dear, then run down and bring me the rest of the paper. Edmund was reading it when I came up, but he’s surely done with it now.”

While Lillian was gone Laura quickly removed the letter from the envelope and substituted one she had a day or so before received from a lady friend in London whom Lillian particularly admired. “I despise such deception,” she muttered, “but what else can I do? I dislike to grieve the child by a sharp refusal, and evasive answers would only arouse her curiosity and probably cause her to unwittingly betray me.”

On returning Lillian exclaimed, “Oh, you’ve opened it, auntie, and is it a real letter?”

“See for yourself,” replied Laura.

Lillian did so, read a few lines, then turned to the signature, while a smile of satisfaction lighted her face. A moment afterward she bounded off to prepare for her governess and the school-room. Laura then opened her letter, which was dated at the Langham Hotel, London, and ran as follows:—

“Dear Miss Burton:—I wrote you some weeks ago and have waited day after day for your reply, until at last I have decided that my letter never reached you. The nature of it was strictly confidential and concerned only you and myself.

“Please answer this at your early convenience, and let me know if a continued correspondence between us would be agreeable.

Sincerely yours,

HAROLD L. CORNELL.”

An angry light flashed from Laura's eyes. "Evidently his wife has not yet written him of my call," she decided; "otherwise he would not be so persistent in forcing his attentions upon me. But why does he treat *me* as he might an adventuress? I probably encouraged him last summer believing him to be unmarried, and honorable as well; but that should give him no right to take advantage of my ignorance to persecute me as he is doing now. What can be his motive, anyway? Would he ultimately be daring enough to propose marriage to me, thinking that if once on the other side of the world I would never know of his wife? If not that, what can he intend? In any event I'll write him a letter that will end all this without compromising myself in case it falls into other hands."

Taking a sheet of paper she impulsively wrote the following:—

"Mr. Harold Cornell:—Your letters were both received. I had thought my silence would have caused you to conclude that I had discovered you as you are. Your recent letter, therefore, is a surprise to me, and I write this only to let you know most emphatically that a correspondence between us, or even further acquaintance, would be decidedly objectionable. You may understand my reasons when I mention that I have recently been introduced to Mrs. Harold L. Cornell, your neglected wife.

Yours very truly,

THE 'LADY OF THE ROBINS.'

New York, April 19th."

Laura placed the letter in an envelope, wrote the address, and was in the act of sealing it when Mrs. Burton unceremoniously entered the room.

"I knocked," she said apologetically, "but you evidently did not hear me, so I took the liberty of walking in."

Laura was dismayed, nevertheless she laid the envelope carelessly aside, hoping it would escape notice. But Mrs. Burton's eyes were keen.

"To whom are you writing," she asked curiously. Laura hesitated.

"It's no secret, surely? No more millinery schemes in prospect, I hope?"

"O no," was the indifferent reply.

"Let me see the letter," said Mrs. Burton, rather peremptorily.

Laura made no move to comply, whereupon Mrs. Burton coolly reached over, took up the letter, and read the address.

"Indeed!" she exclaimed in tones of surprise. "It is something of a secret, then, after all? How long have you been carrying on a clandestine correspondence with Mr. Cornell?"

"This is the first time I have written him."

"And he —?"

"Has written me twice."

"Show me his letters."

"I have destroyed them."

"Do you object to my reading your answer?"

"I do most certainly."

"Suppose I insist on reading it?"

"I am sure you will not do that, mother, and I will never give my consent."

"Why do you so strongly object?"

"Because it is of interest to only myself."

"And to Mr. Cornell, I suppose?"

Her skeptical tone caused the color to mantle Laura's cheek, which was naturally misconstrued.

"Suppose your objection is not sustained, and that I read it without your consent?"

"It is sealed," was the evasive reply.

"That does not matter; it can easily be unsealed."

Mrs. Burton made a move as though to open the envelope. Every vestige of color swept from Laura's face. She rose to her feet.

"Mother," she said in a low, intense tone, "I do not wish to displease you, but I am not a child to be treated in this manner, nor with unjust suspicion; and if you read that letter I shall leave your house forever."

"Where would you go, pray?"

"To Mrs. Vernoyse. She would receive me and make me welcome. I have recently learned that she wanted me when a child, and her affection for me to-day is as strong as ever."

Mrs. Burton suddenly changed her tactics. "I have no wish to pry into your private affairs," she said. "You surely can be trusted with the responsibility of them yourself, after the careful training you have received from me. I wished merely to test your daughterly confidence, that was all. As for Mr. Cornell, he was certainly a pleasant neighbor;

but our acquaintance with him was too slight for me to pass judgment, either favorable or otherwise; consequently, I think a correspondence with him would be quite improper, and as your mother — your natural adviser — I do not demand, but ask as a favor that you destroy this letter and promise to not write him again.”

Laura meditated a moment, then tore it into atoms.

“ You will not write another?” her mother questioned.

“ No,” was the calm reply. “ What I have to say to Mr. Cornell can be said verbally as well.”

“ I will assume the responsibility and write Mr. Cornell a note of explanation,” said Mrs. Burton, “ relieving you of all odium in the matter.”

“ I beg you to do nothing of the kind,” exclaimed Laura. “ If I ever see him I can make any explanation that may be necessary.”

“ Very well, it shall be as you wish.”

Mrs. Burton walked a few paces away, then suddenly remembering her errand turned back. “ By the way,” she said, “ I came in merely to tell you that Mrs. Herbert Montgomery wishes us to join her theatre party next Thursday evening.” Then with an air of offended dignity Mrs. Norman Burton swept from the room.

Laura breathed freer. “ What an escape!” she mused. “ So I am to be trusted because of my ‘ careful training.’ Oh! what if she had read it and discovered the truth! He, a married man, and in secret correspondence with me. Alas! he deserves



to be betrayed, but I cannot do it. I have no wish to publicly disgrace him, although he might not hesitate to disgrace and to degrade me. And yet mother must some time know that he has a wife; they all must know in time, unless he disposes of 'Glenmoyne' and never returns. But the rest they shall never know — no one shall ever know!"



## CHAPTER XVII.



EARLY in May Mrs. Burton arranged to pass another summer at "Wildwood." To her surprise Laura objected, and suggested a trip through Scotland or Germany instead.

"I thought you preferred 'Wildwood' to any other place," said her mother. "Last season you seemed enchanted. I expected objections from Helen but not from you."

"'Wildwood' is delightful, but I would like a change this season," said Laura.

"I am sorry you are so vacillating," returned Mrs. Burton dryly, "for I have positively arranged to go there next week. My throat has troubled me for several days, and a sea-voyage would not be at all advisable."

"Why not go to the mountains or to Newport?" asked Laura.

"Simply because I have decided on 'Wildwood.' The air agrees with me perfectly; there can be no possible objection."

Laura said no more. She could only accept the inevitable. But the thought of going back was painful. The past would be brought vividly to her mind; she would live it all over again, and the grief,

and humiliation. But there seemed no alternative, and a few days later Laura Burton was back at "Wildwood."

At first she shunned the old haunts and familiar scenes. Then becoming restless she longed to roam about as of old, but she went alone. Even Lillian's companionship was unwelcome; her ceaseless chatter annoyed her.

"How I regretted to leave here last fall," she muttered while looking along the road she had traversed that bright September morning. "How I anticipated returning. Alas! I am here, but how changed all things seem, and now I wish I were far away."

On reaching the tree where Mr. Cornell had secured the young robins for her, she sank down on the green grass, and ere long unbidden tears came to her eyes. "What a foolish creature I was," she mused, "to give him my affection as I did. And he! Heaven forgive him for leading me on. For *now* I know that he *did* make love to me if only with his eyes. I knew it intuitively then, although afterward I tried to exonerate him by believing that I was mistaken. I might believe that I was still mistaken only for his letter of open confession."

While sitting there she resolved never to see Mr. Cornell again. Possibly he had given her up. If so, well and good. But if he wrote again, or endeavored to see her, she would make a confidante of Mrs. Vernoyse, and under the promise of secrecy implore her to act for her in the matter. Since re-

turning to "Wildwood" Laura did not feel quite so sure of herself; that is, not quite so sure of the intense hate she imagined she had entertained for him. Hence her sudden resolution.

The next day she suggested that Lillian go over to "Glenmoyne" to see her old friends once more. "Don't mention that I sent you," she added, "but simply see if the house is open, and if your pet animals are all there."

"And, auntie, I would like to know if Mr. Cornell is there, and Major Upton."

"Very well, you will probably find out."

An hour later Lillian returned with wonderful news to report.

"O, I had such a lovely time!" she cried, "and I got ice cream and cake, and a ride on Jumbo's back — Jumbo's the big shaggy dog — and I can't tell everything, there's so much to tell."

"Is Major Upton there?" asked Laura.

"No, auntie, but—O yes, I forgot — Mr. Cornell is coming home. He's in England, and he'll be here next Thursday, and they're hurrying to get the house all fixed up before he comes. And they've got such lovely new things, curtains and porch-chairs, and such a beautiful hammock, and two lovely pictures most as high as this room. Mr. Cornell sent them home ahead of him."

"Next Thursday," thought Laura. "One week from to-morrow and he will be here. Evidently he is coming to remain; how dare he do it? How shall

I manage to avoid him? Must I keep housed up all summer for fear of meeting him?"

Her final decision was to leave "Wildwood" the day before Mr. Cornell arrived at "Glenmoyne." Then her going would in no way be connected with him, as she was not supposed to know that he was coming. In order to avoid all explanations to her mother she determined to go to New York, as she occasionally did for an afternoon. When there she would confide fully in Mrs. Vernoyse, and ask permission to accompany her to Newport for the summer, inasmuch as that lady was making active preparations for going within a fortnight. From town she would write her mother of her plans, and request that Zoa, her maid, pack her trunks and follow with them to Newport. That course would preclude all possibility of an encounter with Mr. Cornell, either at "Wildwood," in case he called, or within its environs.

"Mother will think it a strange move that I don't run up from town before starting for Newport," thought Laura. "But I prefer to placate her later on than run the chance of meeting him. If he follows me to Newport, which I sincerely hope he will, Mrs. Vernoyse will not hesitate to see him in my stead, and let him know that his perfidy is discovered, and denounce him in her own name as well as mine. That will end the matter at once and forever."

The week dragged heavily. In a quiet way Laura made many little preparations toward her approach-

ing flight; the rest would devolve on the unsuspecting Zoa after she had gone. The day of departure arrived clear and cool. From the breakfast-room Laura went out for a farewell ramble, feeling very depressed, and loath to converse with any member of the family.

“I’ll gather a bunch of wood violets for Mrs. Vernoyse,” she thought, “and one for myself, as a farewell memento.” With that intent she walked towards the woods, until reaching a mossy bank profusely decorated with them, she sat down. By her watch it was nine o’clock. They lunched at two, and at three-thirty she would take the train for New York.

An hour passed, then the sun broke through the leaves of the tree under which she sat, and threw its rays directly across her face. She rose to change her position, but instead stood motionless, as though rooted to the spot, while the color receded from her face. Not more than a hundred yards away, and advancing rapidly toward her, was the man of all others from whom she wished to escape. A groan passed her lips as she saw that at the last moment, as it were, fate had conspired against her and thwarted her plans. All unconscious of her perturbation he hastened nearer, utterly unprepared for her reception. Her cheeks suddenly flushed, her breath came fast. No longer could she feign even a cool politeness. Her one thought was to convince him of his error without betraying the fact that she had ever cared for him.

He approached looking so pleased to have found her, and so perfectly frank and honest, that she looked upon him in amazement.

“This is indeed a pleasure,” he exclaimed, extending his hand. “The morning being so fine I felt sure you would be out enjoying it, and I am glad my impressions were correct.”

She did not accept his offered hand, nor speak; she only stared at him blankly. In his eagerness he did not observe. He only saw her flushed cheeks, and construed her manner into surprise because of his sudden appearance, for he believed that she still thought him in England.

“I came up a day earlier than I intended,” he proceeded frankly, “for the express purpose of seeing you. I called at your town house, but on learning you were here I lost no time in following.”

Still she made no answer—no sign of recognition. “He does not know,” she was saying to herself. “He does not suspect that I have found him out.”

Had she been any other than Laura Burton, he would have interpreted her manner differently. But he knew instinctively that she had loved him, and she must have known as well that he loved her. Moreover, he considered her a typical woman; a woman who was steadfast, and who would not swerve in her affections, and for that reason he did not believe his letters had reached her. He had had sufficient insight into Mrs. Burton's character to judge her capable of scrutinizing her daughter's correspondence, and of withholding any communications she

felt disposed; and long before leaving England he decided that Laura had never received them.

“While in London,” he said, “I wrote you two letters, but I never received an answer.”

“I am well aware of that fact,” she returned coldly.

He looked up in quick surprise. “Did you receive them?” he asked.

“Yes, I received them.”

“Why did you not answer?”

She drew herself up proudly; the color again left her cheeks. He expected to hear her say: “Because I was not permitted; my mother forbade me.” But Mr. Cornell was mistaken. Miss Burton’s answer was quite unlike what he anticipated.

“Why did I not answer?” she repeated in tones of scorn. “Do you ask me that? — you?”

A shade passed over his face; he stepped back amazed — doubtful.

“Mr. Cornell,” she continued in suppressed tones, “what cause have I given you to insult me as you have done? Have I unconsciously led you to infer that I am a woman of no principle?”

He looked at her incredulously. “How and when have I insulted you, Miss Burton?” he asked with dignity.

“By offering me your love,” she answered.

For the moment he made no reply; he was too dumbfounded to speak. Then he asked gravely:

“Do you consider it an insult for an honorable man to offer his love to a woman? Is it a reflection



on her morals? If so, my father once insulted my mother, your father insulted yours, and thousands of good, pure women are being insulted every day by men good and true. Have I rightly interpreted your meaning, Miss Burton?"

"No, you have not. I did not say nor intimate that it would be an insult for an *honorable* man to offer a woman his love. I only said that you have insulted me by offering yours."

"What am I to understand by that?" he asked haughtily.

"Mr. Cornell," she returned with visible contempt, "I am in no mood for a comedy — a farce, rather. So please do not feign ignorance of my meaning."

"I feign nothing!" he retorted with rising anger. "I am completely mystified as to your meaning."

"Then I will speak more plainly. I have discovered everything; I know you as you are; know the double life you are living; know you to be dishonorable in the extreme, and one of the most bold and reckless of men, else you would not dare speak to me as you have done almost within stone's throw of those whom you are wronging."

He folded his arms and looked upon her calmly. All trace of anger had fled. Nevertheless a tinge of irony was visible as he said:

"Miss Burton, will you kindly tell me what you have discovered, and in what way I have been 'dishonorable in the extreme?'"

"Your air of injured innocence is very cleverly

assumed," she replied; "but it is quite in vain, and only dishonors you the more."

"I positively assert that I have not the remotest idea of what all this means," he returned, with marvellous good temper. "I am either the victim of some practical joke, or—" He paused abruptly. "Perhaps you have discovered, or think you have discovered, that I am some criminal escaped from justice; some forger, possibly. If so, I shall be compelled to prove a case of mistaken identity."

"'Mistaken identity' does not enter into this case," she replied sternly, "nor are you charged with being either a forger or a criminal of any kind. I merely charge you with treacherously making love to me when you have a wife."

"A wife—I a wife?" Then he laughed outright. "Is that all you have against me?" he asked, a look of amusement lighting his face.

"Is not that under the circumstances quite enough?" she demanded.

"It might be, I admit, if she were real; but as she is purely mythical the case is altered."

"Do you deny having a wife?"

"I do most emphatically."

"And I positively assert that your denial is false! I have seen her, conversed with her, and proved conclusively that what you say is as base as it is untrue."

His face flushed hotly; her words stung deep.

"Did the woman actually claim to be my wife?"

"She did; she spoke of you as her husband repeatedly."

“And do you believe her word in preference to mine?”

“I am forced to do so.”

“Why?”

“Because everything in evidence proves her claim to be correct. She named your characteristics, mentioned your being in London in search of claims, she had your photograph, besides innumerable other proofs.”

“Miss Burton,” he returned gravely, “this is all very mystifying, but believe me it is false. You are deceived. The woman, whoever she be, is either an adventuress or a lunatic. She sought you out and told you what she did because of some evil designs on me. Who is she? Where does she live? Give me her address and my first act shall be to confront her and disprove every word she has said.”

“She is Mrs. Harold Cornell,” was the slightly sarcastic reply, “and she lives in your town residence, although she has never yet graced ‘Glenmoyne.’ As for being an adventuress or a lunatic, it is positively shocking for you to speak of your wife in that manner. Nor did she seek me because of designs on you. I sought her instead, and found her an eminently respectable woman — a handsome woman. And in her name I resent your false and malicious charges.”

His face suddenly lighted. “There may be another Harold Cornell in New York,” he said quickly. “Very probably there is, and consequently a Mrs. Harold Cornell. It is she you have seen. In any

event, she is in no way connected with me. I never saw her, never heard of her before."

A flash of scorn shot from her eyes. "I regret to contradict you again, Mr. Cornell," she said, "but your memory is treacherous, and your last statement incorrect. I once saw you with her myself, and she afterward spoke of you as her husband."

"Where were we? — where did you see us?" he asked calmly.

Laura hesitated. She might have safely named the Emporium without betraying her connection with it, and he would have understood his ground, but he was thrown off his guard when she replied instead that she had seen them on the street together prior to his going abroad.

"On what street?" he asked with apparent eagerness.

"On Fifth Avenue." Her answer was vague and misleading, although truthful so far as it went. Had she mentioned having seen them in a carriage accompanied by a child resembling himself, he would have given in, so far as admitting that she had seen him. As it was, he believed her mistaken; nevertheless he tried to think of any casual acquaintance with whom he might have been seen. He remembered meeting Florence Morton one day just as he emerged from the Academy of Music. Another time he had walked a block or two with Mrs. Paxton, the wife of an intimate friend. He had also ridden on horseback along the avenue and through Central Park with Catherine St. John. But it was absurd, and

out of the question to think that any one of those would falsely claim to be his wife, and he was positive that Miss Burton had seen him with no one else. The matter was becoming serious; he appeared greatly annoyed.

"You evidently have a chain of circumstantial evidence against me," he said, "but give me time and I will break every link. It is only an intrigue, a plot. The woman cannot substantiate her claim. She has no certificate of marriage; no proof unless it be forged, and that can readily be detected and disproved."

Laura moved impatiently.

"Tell me her street and number," he continued, unheeding her manner. "This thing must be settled before the sun sets, and I've no time to lose."

She was too indignant to reply. From her standpoint he was checkmated, knew of no other move to make, and merely wished some pretext by which to escape. She gave him a contemptuous glance, then turned away without one word of farewell.

He hurriedly stepped in front of her. She drew haughtily aside.

"Mr. Cornell," she said with calm dignity, "permit me to pass, and be kind enough to consider our acquaintance ended."

"Miss Burton," he replied with amazing assurance, "pardon me if my words sound rude, but I shall do nothing of the kind. Our acquaintance is not ended; nor shall it end in this manner. I demand justice. The blackest criminal is entitled

to that ; he is granted a full hearing, a chance to defend himself and to prove his innocence. I not only want justice for my own satisfaction but because of my love for you. I have loved you long and devotedly. I love you now, and I cannot permit you to denounce me as you have and go on believing me a scoundrel, without a protest. After I have disproved your charge and am fully exonerated, then if you still wish to discontinue my acquaintance, I shall be compelled to withdraw."

"Are you really willing to have this case investigated?" she asked searchingly.

"Yes, a thousand times willing."

"Are you willing to have it made public? — willing to face the woman who calls herself your wife?"

"Yes, more than willing. I am eager, impatient! Where is she?"

"You have no idea then who she is or where she lives?"

"Not the slightest."

For a moment Laura was silent. A pained look swept across her face ; her expression was anxious, entreating.

"Mr. Cornell," she began gravely, "I would have spared you ; not that you deserve any consideration from me, but —." She suddenly paused and turned away her face, her lip quivered. Presently reasserting herself she proceeded : "I would have spared you because of our pleasant acquaintance last summer. You refuse to be spared ; very well, the consequence be on your own head. Meet me at

— Madison Avenue this afternoon at half after four, and accompanied by our mutual friend, Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse, we will confront Mrs. Harold Cornell.”

“ I will be there,” he replied, “ ready to confront a thousand ‘ Mrs. Harold Cornells,’ and to disprove the title of each and every one of them so far as I am concerned. But who is Mrs. Archibald Vernoyse, the ‘ mutual friend ’ you referred to ? ”

“ Do you also deny acquaintance with her ? ”

“ I do. I have not the honor of her acquaintance any more than I have of the others connected with this conspiracy.” His tone was slightly sarcastic as he added : “ She evidently is another important link in the chain against me.”

Without replying, Miss Burton walked rapidly away. His barefaced denial of everything was to her intolerable, and she felt exceedingly bitter at his effrontery in trying to deceive, and impose on her credulity in the face of such facts.



## CHAPTER XVIII.



OR a time Mr. Cornell remained standing where she had left him. He was angry, grieved, and mystified.

“And this is the reception I was so eagerly hastening to!” he exclaimed bitterly. “For many months I have loved her, and thought of her, longing to see her, and all that time she was being prejudiced against me. What enemy have I capable of doing me such a wrong? Who could have told her? Or is it a scheme of some designing woman? This Mrs. Vernoyse, for instance, who perhaps is a man-hater, and knowing me to be rich, has lent her hand toward dragging me down. Other men have been annoyed in the same way, but this affair is the first of the kind I’ve ever encountered, and it shall be sifted to the very bottom, until the sinister motive of this Vernoyse woman — this Jezebel, is discovered.”

The most perplexing, the most aggravating feature of the case was the possibility of Miss Burton having seen him with his enemy. That was indeed a matter for consideration.

It was just four o’clock when Miss Burton was ushered into Mrs. Vernoyse’s boudoir. Mrs. Ver-



noysey quickly detected that something unusual had transpired, and anxiously asked what it was.

"I have so much to tell you," began Laura, "that really I don't know where to begin, and what will surprise you is that it concerns Mr. Cornell; the man you believe to be so honorable, so loyal to his wife, and so incapable of wrong."

"Mr. Cornell?" repeated Mrs. Vernoysey in astonishment. "Is he home — has he returned from London?"

"Yes, he returned yesterday. Do you remember that during our drive the day we called there I expressed surprise because he remained home while his wife was abroad?"

"Yes, I remember it very well, and your intimation that some other woman must be in the case."

"My intimation was perfectly correct," replied Laura. "There *was* another woman in the case, and—heaven forgive me—that woman was myself."

Mrs. Vernoysey raised her hands protestingly.

"Hear me through before you pass judgment," said Laura. "I was perfectly innocent, and more sinned against than sinning. I could have told you then that you were deceived in Mr. Cornell; that I knew him far better than you. But I refrained from doing so. He has a country residence near 'Wildwood,' where he palms himself off as an unmarried man. We became acquainted last summer, he made love to me, and what the result would have been had I not discovered the truth in time I cannot say."

Mrs. Vernoysey was greatly agitated and anxious

to know full particulars. Laura mentioned having seen Mr. and Mrs. Cornell together, and of subsequently learning that she was his wife. "When you took me to their house that day," she added, "I recognized her at once, and my reason for remaining was to learn all that I could."

"Where is Mr. Cornell now?"

"On his way here. He called on me directly he landed, learned we had gone to the country, and followed."

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes, this very day, and accused him of his perfidy."

"What did he say for himself?"

"He denied everything; swore he was never married; defied Mrs. Cornell to produce a marriage certificate or to prove her marriage; he even denied his acquaintance with you."

"Then what is he coming here for?"

"To confront Mrs. Cornell in our presence, and to denounce her and her claim on him as fraudulent."

"And to deny me to my face, I suppose. The man is crazy!" exclaimed Mrs. Vernoyse. "He's 'clean gone daft,' as they say in Scotland. Upon my word it's the most extraordinary affair I ever heard of, and the most incredible. It's another proof that the biggest fool on earth, no matter whether young or old, is the man who is bewitched by a woman. He's as senseless, as regardless of consequences as was Esau when he sold his birthright for a mess of pottage. But I never would have

believed this of Mr. Cornell. I thought him the soul of integrity."

"Do you know anything of the Cornell family?" asked Laura.

"Indeed yes. They are Bostonians, most excellently connected. I met them in society some two years ago and have kept up a sort of acquaintance ever since."

Mrs. Vernoyse looked upon Laura in earnest solicitude. A new thought had occurred to her. "My dear," she said, "I had imagined this affair entirely one-sided, but is it possible that you love Mr. Cornell?"

"No, Mrs. Vernoyse, I do not. I feel too indignant, too resentful, to entertain for him any feeling other than contempt."

"Certainly, since discovering his wife," replied Mrs. Vernoyse shrewdly. "But previous to that, last summer for instance; when you believed him unmarried. Did you love him then?"

Laura's eyes fell beneath her earnest gaze, and Mrs. Vernoyse was answered. "It is too bad," she sighed, "I am more sorry than you know. Poor girl, you have had your own sorrow and borne it bravely." Mentally she added: "You loved him then and you love him now. You are trying to believe that you dislike him, but you do not; your love as yet is unquenched."

Just then there was a sharp ring at the street door. Laura glanced at a clock on the mantel. It was half after four.

“He has come,” she said, a pallor sweeping over her face in dread of the prospective interview.

“Don’t you believe it!” exclaimed Mrs. Vernoyse. “Unless he’s another ‘Sampson Brass’ he will never have the effrontery to face me. You have bewitched him no doubt, but now that he is unveiled he will speedily come to his senses, and never in my presence dare deny my acquaintance any more than he will dare proclaim Mrs. Cornell to be his common-law wife, and disgrace his children. He agreed to come here simply to throw you off your guard until he could get away. Very likely he’ll take the first steamer back to London and remain there until this affair blows over. Perhaps he will write begging you not to betray him to his wife. The next time he returns to this country I dare say he will go to her direct instead of chasing off after you or any other pretty girl.”

A moment later a servant entered to announce Mr. Cornell.

Mrs. Vernoyse rose from her chair. “The man is a lunatic!” she cried, “and certainly irresponsible for his actions. It doesn’t matter whether Mrs. Cornell is his wife legally or not; she certainly has an undisputable claim on him. But who would have believed it? And what does he mean by coming here? Does he imagine you will forgive him and marry him after such a course? It’s a positive insult to you.”

“Please go to him alone,” pleaded Laura. “I will follow and remain unseen.”

Mrs. Vernoyse descended the stairs looking very severe, and ready to wage war with the poltroon who would desert and compromise his family because of an unhallowed infatuation, and who had sought to compromise a pure and high-minded girl as well.

On entering the reception-room a stranger politely rose and stepped forward. She glanced swiftly about but no one else was there. Evidently Miss Burton's admirer had not dared face her after all, and had sent a substitute.

"I was expecting to see Mr. Cornell," she said coldly. "You represent him, I suppose?"

"I am Mr. Cornell," he replied with dignity. "Whom have I the honor of addressing?"

"I am Mrs. Vernoyse."

He stepped back, surprised into silence. He had expected to find a much younger woman—a bleached blonde of the adventuress type who had cleverly succeeded in influencing Miss Burton. But this elderly woman with a noble face, a crown of fluffy grey hair, and majestic bearing, astonished him.

Her surprise was equal to his own. "Are you Mr. Cornell of 'Glenmoyne?'" she asked.

"I am," he returned frankly.

"Are you the man who Miss Burton believes has dealt so treacherously with her?"

"Unfortunately I am."

For the moment they were guilty of staring at each other.

Mr. Cornell spoke first. "Is Miss Burton here?" he questioned.

“Yes, she is here and will see you presently.”

“May I ask if you are the Mrs. Vernoyse who claims to know me and, if I remember correctly, to know my wife?”

“I do not know you,” she answered, “but I know a Mr. Cornell who is near enough like you to be your twin brother.”

A sudden inspiration came to her. “Do you know Mrs. H. L. Cornell of — West Fifty-seventh street?” she asked eagerly.

“I know her well,” he replied, “she is my brother’s wife.”

“And you?”

“I am H. L. Cornell also, my name being Harold Livingston, while my brother’s is Henry Lamont Cornell.”

A smile of satisfaction suddenly lighted his eyes, the links were gradually breaking away without violence. His character was about to be cleared. He was perfectly innocent of the unjust suspicion resting upon him. He had no wife, and the only woman whom he had ever desired to make his wife was Laura Burton. The Mrs. H. L. Cornell, from whose steel-blue eyes Laura had once withdrawn her own, and whose signature at the Emporium had given her such a shock, was Mrs. Henry Lamont Cornell, Mr. Harold Livingston Cornell’s sister-in-law. Many months before, when business interests took Henry Lamont Cornell to London, he requested his brother Harold to look in occasionally during his absence to see that Pauline and the children were all right. He

promised to do so, and kept his word, although he had but little regard for his brother's wife, whose tastes and opinions differed entirely from his own. Nevertheless, every morning while in town, until he found it necessary to join his brother in London, he called at her residence in West Fifty-seventh street to see if he could be of any service, and the fact of her having required his services one morning accounts for my heroine's error concerning him.

It flashed to his mind like a revelation that Miss Burton had seen him in company with Pauline that morning, and afterward when Pauline had spoken of her husband Miss Burton had believed she was speaking of him.

Mrs. Vernoyse, not being dull of comprehension, understood the situation in an instant and realized the great injustice done the man before her. Eager to undo the wrong, she impulsively grasped his hands.

"I came here to censure you," she said, "for contemplating a wrong to your family and to Laura Burton; but it is all a mistake, and I congratulate you instead and ask forgiveness for my unjust suspicions and for hers. I know you love her," she continued, "for in her need of advice she confided everything to me. I am equally certain she loves you, although she has just assured me very positively to the contrary; and she is very much distressed, believing as she does that you are Mr. H. L. Cornell of Fifty-seventh street, whom she knows to be a husband and father."



Mrs. Vernoyse turned to call Laura, but Laura was standing as though transfixed on the threshold. She had overheard all, and the sudden reaction was overwhelming. Mr. Cornell saw her, knew that she loved him, and in his intense joy and relief he stepped forward regardless of Mrs. Vernoyse's presence and clasped her in his arms. She raised her face to his, and the expression of happiness there convinced him that at last she thought him worthy of her love. Hurriedly withdrawing from his arms she said :

“Can you ever forgive me?”

“I have nothing to forgive,” he returned gently. “I have not entertained one hard thought toward you. I know that from your standpoint you could not have acted differently. But let us drop the past, the present is quite sufficient.”

“I must tell you,” she replied. “I cannot be satisfied until you know how it all occurred. Then I, too, will be glad to drop the subject forever as the greatest mistake of my life.”

Mrs. Vernoyse had prudently disappeared, and Laura told her story, and then innocently asked if he thought her justified.

“Certainly,” he said.

“And had I not taken for granted that ‘H. L. Cornell’ could only mean you, all my anxiety and distress would have been averted.”

“Did you love me sufficiently, even then, to feel distressed?” he asked tenderly.

“I suffered far more than you can imagine,” was her quick, impulsive reply.



“My poor darling,” he exclaimed with sudden impulse, “I am so glad to know that my love for you was returned even then. Fate was not quite so cruel as it might have been.”

Mrs. Vernoyse re-entered to invite them to stay and dine with her.

“I dare not,” returned Laura, hurriedly rising. “My mother did not even know that I was coming into town, and will be anxious if I am not at home to dinner.”

Mr. Cornell rose to accompany her.

“Well,” said Mrs. Vernoyse, addressing him, “what is to be the next move in this drama?”

“Nothing to-night,” he replied, “except to see that Miss Burton reaches home by seven o’clock.”

“She will need to reach there some time before seven,” observed Mrs. Vernoyse. “Were she to appear at the dinner-table in any other than full dinner-dress, Mrs. Burton would certainly be displeased. I sometimes waive these small points in cases of emergency, but Mrs. Burton is very precise.”

Mr. Cornell looked at his watch. “It is half-after five,” he said. “We have fifteen minutes to spare and catch the six o’clock train from Forty-second street. That will land us at our own station at six-twenty, and give Miss Burton thirty-five minutes to reach home and prepare for dinner. Will that do?”

“Quite well,” replied Laura.

“It would not do for most ladies—Helen, for instance,” remarked Mrs. Vernoyse.

"But it will be sufficient for me," returned Laura; "with Zoa's assistance half an hour will work a decided transformation."

Mrs. Vernoyse turned to Mr. Cornell. "May I ask how you intend to approach Mrs. Burton in this matter?" she inquired curiously.

"I intend to call upon her in the morning," he returned good-humoredly, "and ask her point blank to sanction our engagement."

"I fear your call may not be pleasant," was the rather discouraging reply. "Mrs. Burton has her peculiarities, and one of them is a desire to keep her children with her as long as she lives; in fact — judging from her present state of health — until they are so old that no one else will want them."

Greatly to Mrs. Vernoyse' surprise, however, and to the surprise of all concerned, Mr. Cornell's interview with Mrs. Burton the next morning was in every way satisfactory, and their engagement sanctioned quite graciously.

During the afternoon Mrs. Vernoyse called at "Wildwood," having received a note by messenger from Laura, detailing the result of the interview. On finding Mr. Cornell there she extended to him her earnest congratulations. Before her arrival Laura had told him of the great friendship existing between them, and how magnanimously Mrs. Vernoyse had treated her, and Mr. Cornell regretted more than ever that even in thought he had accused her of conspiring against him.

The next spring Laura Burton became Mrs.

Cornell, and that summer reigned as the lady of "Glenmoyne."

Aside from those directly interested, no one was more pleased over the event than Lillian Chester, who almost daily assures her "auntie Laura" that she could love no other uncle quite so well as she loves "uncle Harold." She also prides herself in the fact of having introduced them to each other, and as a proper recompense insists that she be permitted to spend the "largest half" of her time with them and the "smallest half" with her grandmother.

As for Helen, she shows every indication of fully complying with her mother's wishes in so far as never leaving the maternal roof is concerned.

Mr. and Mrs. Cornell find life very complete; they are particularly devoted to each other, but not to the selfish exclusion of all else. Mr. Cornell not only encourages his wife in her kindly and generous disposition, but is ready and willing to aid any scheme which she may project in the name of charity or in behalf of our "dumb animals."



## AUTHOR'S APPENDIX.

The story is finished, and I have laid down my pen with reluctance, because there is so much more I wished to say, or have my characters say for me had space permitted. But there are some things ignored by the great majority that I cannot leave unsaid.

I have heard clergymen pray fervently for Divine protection over rulers of nations, and others well able to take care of themselves. I have listened to exhortations to apply the "golden rule" in our treatment of each other. I have made diligent inquiries of the youth I have met concerning the advice their teachers gave them. And in all those prayers, in all those exhortations, and in all the advice, rarely a word of sympathy or counsel was uttered for God's lower animals.

The subject of Humanity is inexhaustible; the application of its principles is essential wherever man exists, and the progress of his civilization is measured more by the development of his humane instincts than by all the scientific achievements of his genius. Some nations are called barbarous by reason of their comparatively cruel customs; others civilized, but their cruelties are only the more deplorable. The law of might is the force in nature which makes it possible for the strong to oppress the weak, and when man's instincts rise above this

law the results are acts of kindness not only to his fellow man but to the dumb animals whose faithfulness is so often recompensed by kicks and blows. This beautiful world, which might be so bright, so happy, is full of sorrow, and is often likened to a vale of tears; for cries of anguish are daily and hourly ascending because of man's inhumanity to man as well as to animal kind.

The growth of criminal instincts begins with the boy when parents laugh at his cruelties to the dog or the cat, or smile when he shouts with glee at the struggles of some insect or butterfly he has robbed of its wings. They teach him his evening prayers almost as soon as he has learned to lisp, but they overlook the most important factor in the development of his better qualities when they neglect the education of the heart, and omit to teach him to be gentle and kind.

Parents, teachers and clergymen have the development of the child entirely in their care, and their influence is most powerful in shaping its destiny. With the parent rests the great responsibility; with the teacher and clergyman the opportunity. It was a kind and wise man who said: "Just so soon and so far as we pour into all our schools the songs, poems and literature of mercy toward these lower creatures, just so soon and so far shall we reach the roots not only of cruelty, but of crime." And he could safely have added: "and reduce both to a minimum in one generation, and in time abolish them."

Again I must lay down my pen. Not that this subject is exhausted or that I am bidding it a final farewell, for it is my firm belief that cruelties are more the result of indifference, ignorance and temper than from a natural desire to be cruel ; and if this book be the means of making a single person more kind, more considerate of the poor dumb creatures at his mercy, it will have demonstrated that opportunities for doing a good work rest not alone with parents, teachers and clergymen, but with authors as well.

A. O. C.

## "WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY *HUMANE* EDUCATION, MR. ANGELL?"

I answer.

(1.) *That which tells the ill effects on human beings, of the ill treatment of dumb animals — how it poisons meats and milk — how even fish, killed mercifully as soon as they are caught, are better and more wholesome food than those that suffer before they die — how important insect eating birds are to agriculture — how important that they and their nests be protected.*

(2.) *That which teaches how animals should be cared for — as to tight check reins, blinders, docking, proper food, rest, protection from the weather, exercise, kind words, and a merciful death.*

(3.) *But infinitely more important, that which tends to prevent all cruelty, both to our own and the lower races.*

(4.) Through over sixty years of my own life I can remember the songs and stories of my boyhood. *They have influenced my whole life.*

(5.) *While all the other American Colonies were at war with the Indians, the Colony founded by William Penn rested in perfect peace.*

(6.) In 1878 I called upon President Hayes, at Washington, to ask him to put in his annual message to Congress something in regard to the cruel transportation of animals. He said: "*When I was at school I once heard a sermon in regard to animals, which I have never forgotten*"; and he put into his message to Congress almost verbatim what I wrote.

(7.) In 1875 I addressed the Faculty and students of Dartmouth College, *on the relation of animals that can speak to those that are dumb.*

In 1885, ten years later, at the close of an address to the Faculty and students of a university in New Orleans, a gentleman rose in the audience and said: "*Some ten years ago I was a student in Dartmouth College, when Mr. Angell gave an address there on this subject. I had never thought of it before. When I left college no one thought was more strongly impressed on my mind than that of my duty to the lower animals.*" He was the superintendent of the public schools of Minneapolis.

(8.) In 1870 and '71 I spent about six months, and about six hundred dollars, founding, at Chicago, the *Illinois Humane Society*. Although every daily paper in the city helped me, and printed columns I wrote, I should have failed to raise the necessary funds but for one man who had been taught, when a little boy in New Hampshire, kindness to animals. In the great stock yards of Chicago alone millions of dumb animals are now properly fed and watered, and largely protected from cruelty every year, because that little boy was taught kindness to animals.

Fathers may be cruel, mothers may be cruel, brothers and sisters may be cruel. It may be impossible in many instances to teach kindness through them. But even in the homes of crime, hearts may be made more tender by kind acts and words for the dumb creatures *that always return love for love.*

GEO. T. ANGELL.

Extract from Address of Mr. Angell to the  
Annual Meeting of "The American Social  
Science Association," in New York City,  
May 21, 1874.

EASY TO INTEREST CHILDREN.

"It is very easy to enlist the sympathies of children in the animal world. Take, for instance, the history and habits of birds: show how wonderfully they are created; how kind to their young; how useful to agriculture; what power they have in flight. The swallow that flies sixty miles an hour, or the frigate bird which, in the words of Audubon, 'flies with the velocity of a meteor,' and, according to Michelet, can float at an elevation of ten thousand feet, and cross the tropical Atlantic Ocean in a single night; or those birds of beauty and of song, the oriole, the linnet, the lark, and, sweetest of all, the nightingale, whose voice caused one of old to exclaim, 'Lord, what music hast thou provided for saints in heaven, when thou hast afforded such music for men on earth?'

"Or, take that wonderful beast of the desert, the camel, which, nourished by its own humps of fat, and carrying its own reservoirs of water, pursues its toilsome way across pathless deserts for the comfort and convenience of man.

*"Is it not easy to carry up the minds and hearts of children by thoughts like these from the creature to the infinitely wise, good, and powerful Creator?"*

"I believe there is a great defect in our systems of education. I believe that in our public schools it is quite as possible to develop the heart as the intellect, and that when this is required and done, we shall not only have higher protection for dumb creatures, and so increased length of human life, but also human life better developed and better worth living. I believe that the future student of American history will wonder, that in the public schools of a free government whose very existence depended upon public integrity and morals, *so much attention should have been paid to the cultivation of the intellect, and so little to the cultivation of the heart.*"



**Extract from Address of Mr. Angell before  
the "International Congress of Educators."  
at New Orleans, Louisiana, Feb. 26, 1885.**

"The wonderful growth of societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals is a subject with which probably some of you are familiar; how they have stretched out their protecting arms, not only in this country, but in Europe, Asia, Africa, and many islands of various oceans, numbering among their members many of the noblest, best, and most illustrious of the world's citizens. In England the Royal Society is under the patronage of the Queen, and its President a member of the Queen's Privy Council.

"The first audience I had the pleasure of addressing there some years ago was presided over by one of the most learned men in England, the Lord Bishop of Gloucester and Bristol, and the gentleman who moved the vote of thanks was Field Marshal Sir John Burgoyne, very near the head of the British army; the second was at the house of the Baroness Burdett-Coutts—probably, next to the Queen, the most highly respected woman in England.

"In France, Germany, and elsewhere, wherever I have traveled in Europe, I have found the same. One German society numbers among its members twenty-three generals and over two hundred officers of the German army.

"In my own State of Massachusetts, I think that no charitable society of the State has on its roll of officers and members more distinguished and influential names than *the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals*. I think that no society in the State is better known, or more popular.

"But, in the limited period allotted me, *one thing* I do have time to tell you; and that is, that we long ago found that the *great* remedy for all these wrongs lies, *not in laws and prosecuting officers, but in the public and private schools; that a thousand cases of cruelty can be prevented by kind words and humane education, for every one that can be prevented by prosecution.*"

# What is Overloading a Horse, and How Proved?

By GEORGE T. ANGELL,

*Founder of the American Humane Education Society, the Massachusetts Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, and the Parent American Band of Mercy, 45 MILK STREET, BOSTON.*

The following, taken from "*Bishop on Statutory Crimes*," edition of 1873, page 689, is believed to be sound law, *the world over*, on the above subject.

It was written by Mr. Angell in reviewing a decision of a Massachusetts Court in 1868 that there was no cruelty because other horses *of the same weight* were able to draw the load in question. *It was the first and last decision of the kind ever rendered in Massachusetts.*

"Must an animal be worked until he breaks a blood vessel or drops dead, before the law takes cognizance? Is the horse to be strained, or worked to the extreme limit of his strength, before such straining or working becomes a cruelty (that is, before the act of his master becomes overloading?)" Can an expert, or any number of experts, say what is the limit of strength or endurance of any horse, simply by knowing his weight? It seems to me that these questions can be easily answered. Horses, like men, are of different ages, constitutions, temperaments, formation, and degrees of strength. One horse, just like one man, may be twice as fast, twice as tough, twice as strong, as another of precisely the same weight; and, inasmuch as horses, like men, are liable to a great variety of sicknesses, and suffer, just like men, from previous overworking and from heat, want of proper rest, food, water, shelter, and care, it follows that the same horse, like the same man, may be able to perform without injury more labor in one day than another.

"Can a thousand experts prove that all men of a given weight or size are equally competent, on every day of the year, to perform a given labor? Can their testimony establish how much load a man of given weight should carry, and how far he should carry it on a given day, without regard to whether the man is old or young, sick or well, strong or weak, tough or tender, already tired or rested, full-fed or starved, or the day hot or cold? And does not precisely the same reason apply to the horse,—*that what one horse can do one day has no force in showing what another ought to do on another day*, unless you show the weather, age, strength, toughness, and bodily condition of the two to be precisely similar? I say, then, that it is just as impossible for any number of experts, knowing only the weight or size of a horse and nothing of his age, health, strength, toughness, and bodily condition, to establish what is, or is not, overloading

## *Overloading a Horse (concluded).*

him, as it would be, knowing only the size or weight of a man, and nothing of his age, health, strength, toughness, or bodily condition, to establish what is or is not an overload for him.

"How, then, are we to determine when a horse is overloaded? Just exactly and precisely as we determine when a man is overloaded. First, *we are to take his own evidence.* If a man stops and says, 'I am overloaded, I am working too hard, I feel that the task put upon me is too heavy,' that is evidence. So when the horse, ordinarily kind and willing to pull, comes with a heavy load to a rise of land and, after one or two efforts, stops and says, as plainly as words can speak it, 'I am overloaded, I am working too hard, I feel that the task put upon me is too heavy,' that is evidence; and there is no court or jury, or man with the heart of a man, who will not recognize it as such. Besides, the signs of overwork are just as visible in the horse as the man. No magistrate or juror would have any difficulty in deciding in his own mind whether a case to which his attention might be attracted in our public streets was or was not a case of cruelty.

"Is not, then, the testimony of competent, intelligent, and credible bystanders, who see how the horse looks and acts, and his bodily condition, health, and capability to perform the labor required, the best evidence that can possibly be obtained? Where can you get better? And when disinterested and intelligent witnesses, who are present and see and hear all that is said and done in a given case, voluntarily leave their ordinary avocations and come into court to testify that they are fully satisfied that the case is a clear case of cruelty, can such evidence be overbalanced by that of any number of experts who are not present, see nothing that occurs, know nothing of the age, health, strength, or bodily condition of the horse at the time, and who base their calculations simply upon the avoirdupois weight of the animal? *It is perfectly evident, then, I say, that the highest and best evidence* which any court or jury can ask or possibly obtain in a case of overloading, overworking, or overdriving, is the evidence of the horse himself, as interpreted by those present when the cruelty is inflicted.

"Cruelty begins very far short of taking the extreme strength of the animal. God has given to men and animals an excess of strength, to be husbanded carefully and used occasionally. But to task that strength to its full limit unnecessarily is against nature, breaks down the man or the animal before his or its time, and is a cruelty against which men, having speech and reason, may protect themselves, *but against which animals, having neither speech nor reason like men, must look to them for protection.*"



### **Founders of American Band of Mercy**

GEO. T. ANGELL and REV. THOMAS TIMMINS

### **Officers of Parent American Band of Mercy**

DR. FRANCIS H. ROWLEY, President

GUY RICHARDSON, Secretary

Over seventy-seven thousand branches of the Parent American Band of Mercy have been formed, with over two million members. They are in every State and Territory and in many foreign countries.

### **PLEDGE**

"I will try to be kind to all living creatures and try to protect them from cruel usage."

M. S. P. C. A. on our badges means "Merciful Society Prevention of Cruelty to All." 1882 shows the year when founded.

We send without cost, to every person asking, a copy of "Band of Mercy Information" and other publications; also without cost, to every person who forms a Band of Mercy, obtaining the signatures of thirty adults or children or both to the pledge, and sends us the name chosen for the Band and the name and post office address (town and state) of the president who has been duly elected:

1. Our monthly paper, *Our Dumb Animals*, for one year.
2. Annual Report of the American Humane Education Society and the Massachusetts S. P. C. A.
3. Mr. Angell's "Address to the Boston Public Schools," "Twelve Lessons on Kindness to Animals," and "Relation of Animals That Can Speak to Those That Are Dumb."